The True Story of Abraham Lincoln

Illustrated

CHILDREN'S LIVES OF GREAT MEN

Elbridge S. Brooks

Marjetta Bigelow

from

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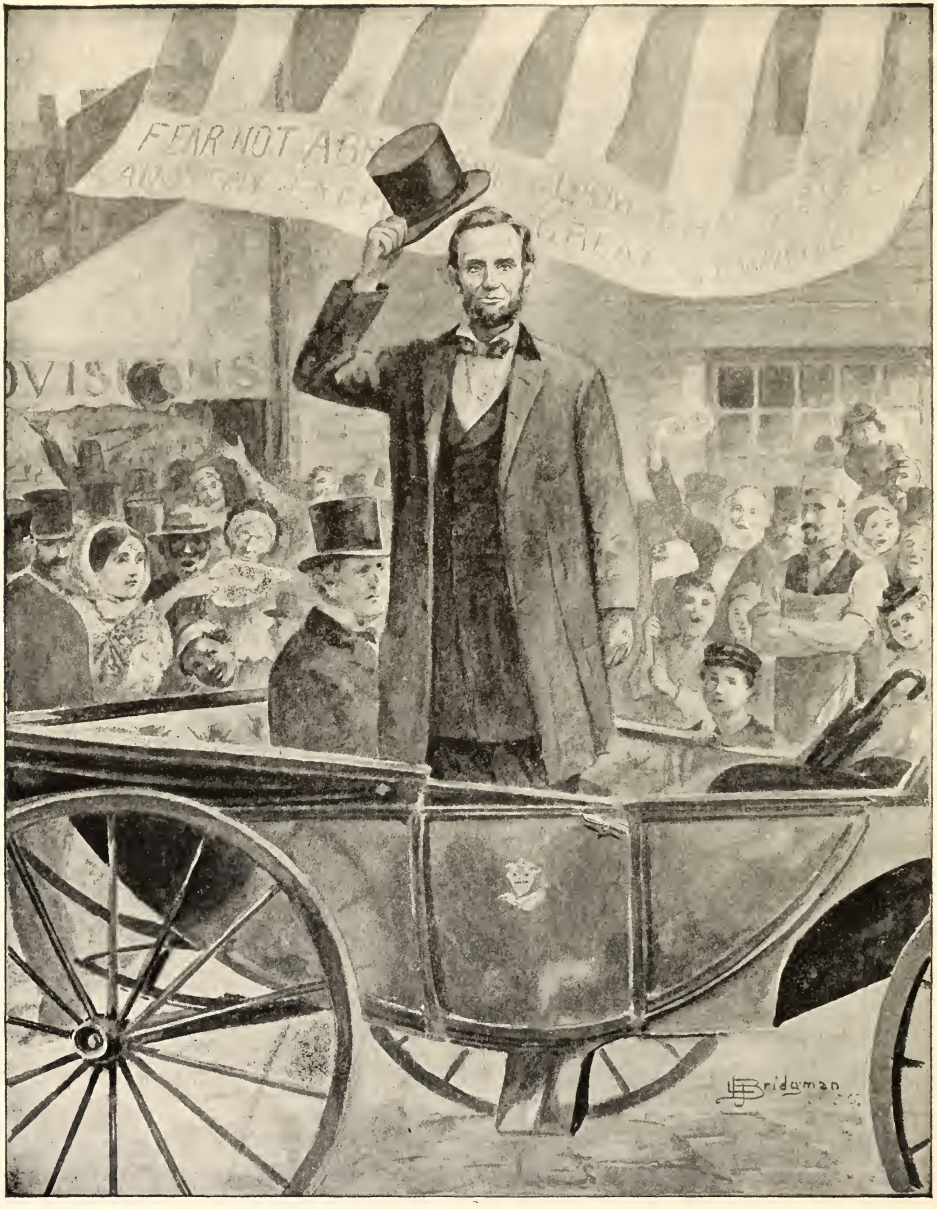

A BOY'S FIRST SIGHT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"*Fear not, Abraham! I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.*"

See page 168.

THE TRUE STORY OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE AMERICAN

TOLD FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY

ELBRIDGE S. BROOKS

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF OUR WAR WITH SPAIN," "THE AMERICAN SOLDIER," "THE AMERICAN SAILOR," "THE TRUE STORY OF THE UNITED STATES," "THE TRUE STORY OF COLUMBUS," "WASHINGTON," "GRANT," "FRANKLIN," "LAFAYETTE," AND MANY OTHERS.

ILLUSTRATED

BOSTON

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PREFACE.

COLUMBUS the discoverer of our country and Washington the father of our country — these two famous ones has this series of "Children's Lives of Great Men" recalled for young Americans. Now comes the third and crowning figure in the series — that of Abraham Lincoln, the savior of his country and, above all others, — the American.

His story is as marvellous as a fairy tale and yet as simple as the truth. Sprung from nothing he rose to the highest eminence, and died a martyr for liberty, union and the rights of man. Upon his life, through four terrible years, hung the destinies of this republic and the redemption of a race. To-day, the world reveres him as one of the most eminent rulers of any time; the future will yet place him where he rightly belongs — one of the world's greatest men, perhaps, the greatest.

For the boys and girls of America, brought up in the atmosphere of liberty, of justice and of patriotism, Abraham Lincoln the man of the people, has an especial claim to reverence. He stands as a type — as, before all others, *the* American.

In the preface to the "The True Story of George Washington," the writer quoted, for boys and girls, a sentiment from one of the noblest of American thinkers and authors, James Russell Lowell. This introduction to the "True Story of Abraham Lincoln," can not be more fittingly closed than with the splendid tribute of this same prophetic poet, in his noble "Commemorative Ode," which every boy and girl of America should some day read:

"These all are gone; and standing like a tower,
Our children shall behold his fame,
The kindly, earnest, brave, far-seeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American."

E. S. B.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW SOMETHING CAME FROM NOTHING 11

CHAPTER II.

A BOY OF THE BACKWOODS 31

CHAPTER III.

HOW ABRAHAM SAW THE WORLD 49

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE RAIL-SPLITTER RAISED HIMSELF 67

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN LINCOLN 84

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE STOREKEEPER GREW AMBITIOUS 100

CHAPTER VII.

THE HONORABLE MR. LINCOLN 115

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE COUNTY LAWYER WON FAME 131

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE BACKWOODS BOY BECAME PRESIDENT 149

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE FLAT-BOATMAN GUIDED THE SHIP OF STATE 167

CHAPTER XI.

HOW ABRAHAM LINCOLN MADE HIS NAME IMMORTAL 187

CHAPTER XII.

WHY THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT "SWAP HORSES" 203

CHAPTER XIII.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN THE AMERICAN 223

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A boy's first sight of Abraham Lincoln. *Frontis.*

"The dark and bloody ground" 13

Daniel Boone 15

The Birthplace of Lincoln 16

"Thomas Lincoln loved to sit around" 19

Lincoln birthplace and spring 20

On Knob Creek 21

"He liked to lay off" 22

Off for a day's fishing 23

Little Abe's peril 24

Little Abe and the soldier 25

The man who was president when Lincoln was a boy (Monroe) 27

"They lived like gypsies" 29

"This was Abraham Lincoln" 33

Going to bed 35

"He bade the children good-bye" 39

"Something like comfort" 41

The traveling schoolmaster 42

Abraham Lincoln and the shingle scrapbook 43

"He was a great reader" 47

"He was 'hired man' and 'chore-boy'" 51

On the farm 52

Abe carrying the corn-crib post 53

"He was always ready to spout" 55

"He was the champion wrestler" 58

A shooting-match on the border 59

Lincoln "tending store" 62

A flat-boat cruise 63

The hero of the cotton bales (Jackson) 63

"They cut her adrift" 64

"Ever willing, handy and helpful" 66

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

A "Vandoo" 68
"Already famous as a rail-splitter" 70
Floating down to New Orleans 72
On the levee at New Orleans 72
In Offutt's store 76
The "Clary-Grove Boys" 78
"He borrowed every book in New Salem" 82
"Who should show up but Abe Lincoln" 85
"I can rock and read too" 85
A race for life 88
Black Hawk, Chief of the Sacs 89
A refugee from the massacre 91
"Men, this must not be" 93
In the Black Hawk War 95
Lincoln coming home from the war 97
Floating down the Illinois 98
"On the navigation of the Sangamon" 101
Henry Clay and "Ashland" 102
"People did not receive many letters in those days" 108
"A. Lincoln, Postmaster" 109
"He's a perfect take-in" 112
"He led the rest round the field" 113
Lincoln in 1840 121
Lincoln and the "mired" pig 124
A station on the "Underground Railway" 127
"Law" answered the boy 132
How Lincoln studied law 133
"He would never take a case he did not believe in" 138
A pickaninny 141
"Bill is free" 144
Lincoln's home in Springfield 145
"On the circuit" 147
Daniel Webster of Massachusetts 151
Henry Clay of Kentucky 152
Stephen A. Douglas 154
The Lincoln-Douglas debate 157
Abraham Lincoln of Illinois 161
"They will kill you, Abe" 165
On the way to Washington 169
The inauguration of President Lincoln 174

Major Anderson 171
Boys of '61 175
Lincoln and his chief advisers 177
Confederate leaders and generals 181
General Winfield Scott 183
Noted American abolitionists 189
A "contraband" 193
First draft of the Emancipation Proclamation 196
Boys ran through the streets crying "Extra!" 201
Defenders of the Union 207
"From the President!" 213
Two famous men in Washington (Lincoln and Grant) 217
The last speech 218
The assassination of Abraham Lincoln 219
"You see I've let my whiskers grow," he said 224
"Who is this little boy?" 226
Tad and his father 228
"My boy, my bill is a large one" 229
The Lincoln monument at Springfield 231
1809–1846–1861 237
The American 238

THE TRUE STORY OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CHAPTER I.

HOW SOMETHING CAME FROM NOTHING.

HEAR the story of Abraham Lincoln, the man who saved America. It is not an old story. It belongs to our own times. I, who write these words, saw, when I was a boy, the Great President, then an untried man, and have loved him ever since. To-day, that untried man is reverenced as one of the mightiest men of the world, and stands foremost among them as, above all others, *the* American.

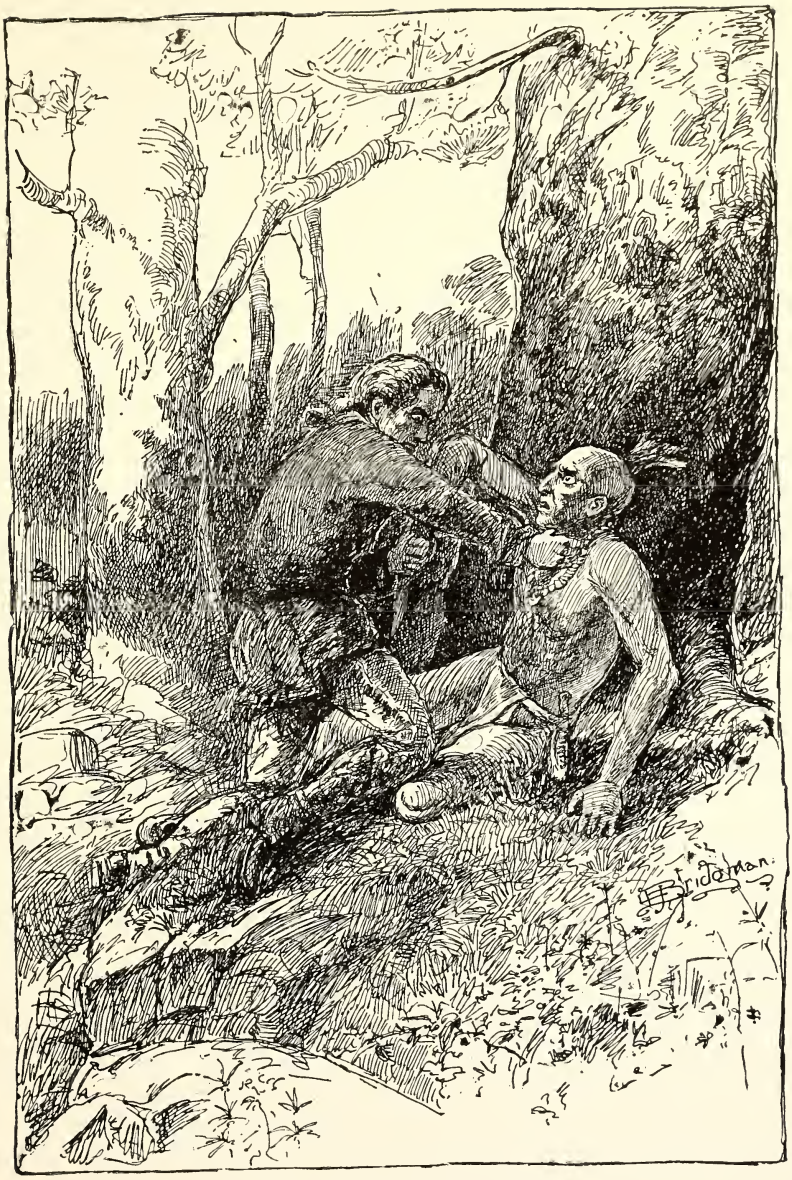
When you study Latin you will come across an old, old sentence that means: *from nothing, nothing comes.* It seems true; and yet, how many of the world's great men have, as a later saying runs, "sprung from nothing."

Of no man was this later saying more true than of Abraham Lincoln. Listen to his story.

Very nearly ninety years ago a homely little baby was born into the smallest and humblest and meanest of homes. It was a miserable little cabin that you would hardly call a hut, placed on a stony hillside, in what is now the central section of the great state of Kentucky.

Ninety years ago the country thereabouts was a wilderness. Great forests hedged it around. The settlers' cabins stood in what were called "clearings," where the trees had been cut down and some of the stumps had been either burned or pulled away — just enough to get a little land on which to raise corn or tobacco.

It was hard farming there. It was all new land. Only a few years before, the Indians had left it, after many bloody battles with the white men. Bears and panthers, wolves and catamounts and other beasts lived in the thick shadows of the woods, and there men hunted for food — for deer and bears and turkeys and the wildest of game. Its streams and rivers were full of fish. Even the buffalo had not entirely gone from the regions beyond the forests; while, in its rocks and undergrowth, foxes had their dens, the lynx his lair, and nobody was safe in the woods unless he had with him his gun, his axe, or his hunting-knife. It was *Kan-tuck-kee* — "the dark and bloody ground"; it was the home of Daniel Boone, most famous of American hunters.



"THE DARK AND BLOODY GROUND."

(" *Only a few years before, the Indian had left it, after many bloody battles with the white men.*")

On the banks of a small stream known as the "big south fork" of Nolin's Creek, in what is now Larue County, Kentucky, three miles from the present village of Hodgensville, and fifty miles south of Louisville, stood the tumble-down log cabin in which lived Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, his wife. And there, on Sunday, the twelfth day of February, in the year eighteen hundred and nine, Abraham Lincoln was born.

It was a miserable little log cabin, scarcely fit, you would think, to stable a cow in; but it was the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. The "farm" was the roughest sort of a clearing — rocky and weedy and scrubby — about the last place in the world you would pick out for a home, or as a spot in which to spend your vacation in the country; but it was the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln; and some day it will be marked by a stately monument, and visited by tourists with as much of interest and as much of reverence as are paid to the birthplaces of Washington, of Shakspere, of Cromwell and Napoleon. Hunt up the place on your map of Kentucky; look well on the page which gives you a picture of the house as it looks to-day, and never cease to be attracted to the spot as the birthplace of the Great American.

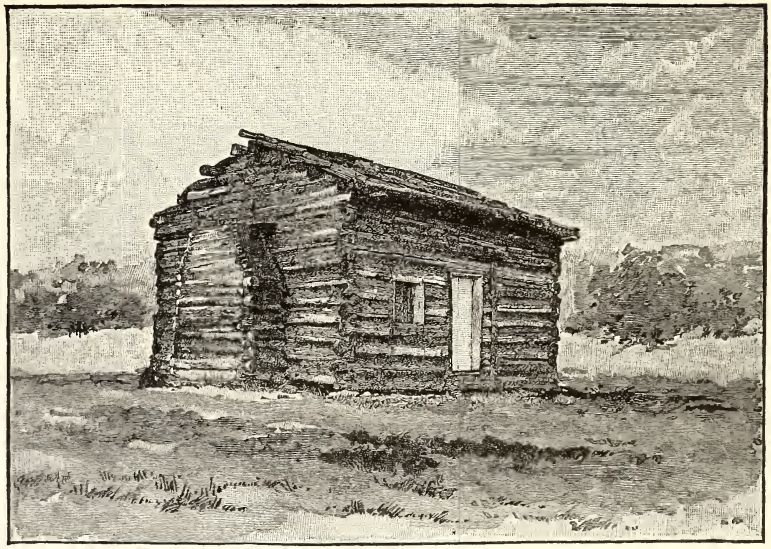
The place is even more attractive-looking than it was

ninety years ago, when Thomas Lincoln picked it out for a home, and put up his little log shanty. For Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham, was not the kind of a man to "fix up" things. He was as lazy as loafing, as shiftless as could be, and as poor as poverty. He was a carpenter without any trade, a farmer without any crop, a man without ambition, energy, or what you boys call "sand." He could not read; he could not write; and he did not care to learn. He loved to sit around and tell stories rather than work, and though he had some affection and some friendly ways, he was, after all, a hard drinker, a ready fighter and an uncomfortable sort of a father. He was of the class long known in the South as "poor whites"—and, of these, he was one of the poorest. Yet, somehow, he managed to get a superior woman for his wife—one who will be forever famous in history as the mother of Abraham Lincoln.

Nancy Hanks, when she married Thomas Lincoln, was a young woman of twenty-three. She was good-looking, could read and write, and, if she could have had one-tenth of the chance that comes to a girl of to-day, might have developed into a beautiful, superior, and noble woman.

She had very few of these opportunities as a girl; she had none whatever as a woman. In Thomas Lincoln's humble, shiftless and poverty-stricken home she could do nothing but work hard to give her children food and clothes. They did not get much of either.

She had three children—a daughter named Sarah, a son



THE BIRTHPLACE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Abraham and a younger son Thomas, who died when he was a baby.

Abraham Lincoln never forgot his mother. His earliest recollection of her was of the days when he and his sister Sarah, a year older than he, sat at their mother's feet in that poor little log cabin at Nolin's Creek, while she, as well as she was able, told them stories and taught them to spell and read.

"THOMAS LINCOLN LOVED TO SIT AROUND AND TELL STORIES."

Abraham thought his mother could do anything. In her rough way she certainly did much for her boy. She could hunt as well as a man; and many a time, when food was scarce in the home and her husband was not to be depended upon, she would take down the rifle and go out and shoot a bear or a deer, skin it, clean it, and cook it for the family meat. She made the deerskin into clothes; she worked herself to death for her husband and her children; but, while doing this, she laid in her son the foundations of truth, and honor, and purity, and goodness, and the ambition

to do something and be something in the world, that helped him all through life. So, whatever her lack of opportunities or ability, let us never forget the mother of Abraham Lincoln.

THE LINCOLN BIRTHPLACE AND THE LINCOLN SPRING.

When the boy was about four years old, his father, in some way, became possessed of a much larger and better farm on what was known as Knob Creek, near where it joins with another stream, called the Rolling Fork. It was only a few miles from the miserable little hillside patch on Nolin's Creek, but the land was much better and might have been worked into a fine farm of over two hundred acres.

Thomas Lincoln, however, did not like to work. To bring two hundred acres under cultivation was altogether too big a job for him; so he simply cleared and farmed enough to give his family "a little meal and a little milk," and that had to satisfy them.

It takes pluck to keep a farm up to the mark, and this Thomas Lincoln never had. He was too lazy to work and too poor to keep the good piece of farmland that had come into his possession. Before Abraham was seven years old

the place on Knob Creek had to be given up, and the family went wandering away towards a new home.

This new home was many miles away in the southern part of the new State of Indiana. It was a long journey and a hard one, but the Lincoln family set out on it, bidding good-bye forever to their "old Kentucky home."

It was in that old Kentucky home, however, that Abraham Lincoln had grown to boyhood. It had been a hard and comfortless "little boyhood." It had given him none of the advantages and none of the childish pleasures that make the memory of "home, sweet home" dear to so many men and women. There was but little fun and frolic about it; there were no games to play and no boys and girls to play with; the nearest school was eight miles away, and the boy's father thought going to school a waste of time.

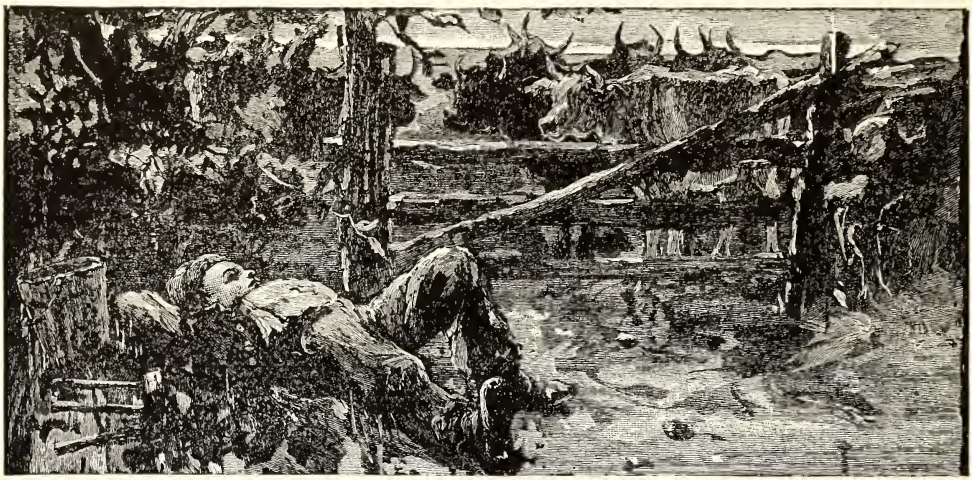
ON KNOB CREEK.

His mother was hard-worked, sad-eyed and discouraged; but she declared her girl and boy should go to school, and so, for a few weeks, once in a while, the brother and sister would trudge off eight miles to the log schoolhouse, with nothing to eat but corn bread, and little to learn except

spelling and arithmetic. Even this schooling was short, and, in all his life, Abraham Lincoln never went to school more than a year, counting all the days together.

So he was a lonely little fellow, in his home on Knob Creek. His father hated work, but was perfectly willing to have his wife and son and daughter work; and he put many hard tasks on the small and scrawny eight-year-old.

I may as well tell you, however, that Abraham never



"HE LIKED TO 'LAY OFF.'"

really loved work. But what boy does? He liked to "lay off." He liked to roam into the woods, as far as it was safe, and watch the birds and animals and all the life that fills the great forest. He had some lonely little games of his own, and liked to play by himself, when his father would let him, among the scanty shavings of the rarely-used shed which his father the carpenter spoke of as "the shop."

THE SPOT WHERE LINCOLN WAS BORN.
(*Near Hodgensville, Ky.*)

He liked to fish, when he did not have to; and we are told that his only recollection of the war with England, called the War of 1812, which was fought when he was a small boy, was meeting an American soldier in the woods and giving him the only fish he had caught that day, because his mother had told him always to be good to the soldiers, who were fighting for his protection.

He never cared much to trap or to hunt. It is dangerous work for so small a boy; and, moreover, it was work

and not play — for that was often the only way to get anything to eat.

But he did, once in a while, go partridge-hunting, boy-fashion, even when he was a little fellow; and, this very year, there was still living, near Knob Creek, an old man who tells people how, when he was about eleven years old, he and

LITTLE ABE'S PERIL.

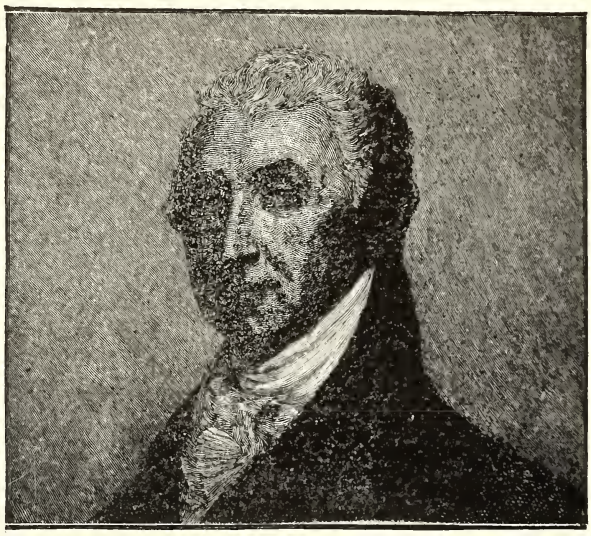
little eight-year-old "Abe Lincoln" went off one day partridge-hunting, and how, when they were trying to cross Knob Creek on a log ("cooning across," the old man called it), little "Abe" rolled off into the water and would have been drowned, if the older boy had not fished him out with a sycamore branch. Do you wonder that this old man has

LITTLE "ABE" AND THE SOLDIER.

been proud to tell the story? It is a great thing to be able to boast that you once saved the life of a hero.

When Abraham Lincoln was eight years old, his father, as I have told you, concluded that he could not get along in Kentucky and so "pulled up stakes," as they said, for the West.

He went off first on his own hook to find a place for the new home. All that he was able to get for his good Kentucky farm of two hundred acres and his little log cabin was twenty dollars in money and ten barrels of whiskey. A barrel of whiskey was as good as money in those days; it was worth about twenty-five dollars, and men, in that western country, were always as ready to trade for whiskey as for cash; they did not drink it up, they "swapped it off" for something else, so it was the same as money to them; and houses and land, tools and cattle, food and clothing were often bought and sold for so much whiskey in exchange.



THE MAN WHO WAS PRESIDENT WHEN LINCOLN WAS A BOY.
(*James Monroe, author of the "Monroe Doctrine."*)

According to this, Thomas Lincoln had received for his

Kentucky farm about three hundred dollars. He built a raft, loaded it with some furniture and ten barrels of whiskey, and with his twenty dollars and his kit of carpenter's tools he floated off, down the Rolling Fork to the Ohio River on a search for Southern Indiana and a new home.

Abraham pushed his father's raft from the river bank and then went back to the log cabin that was soon to be no longer his home, to help his mother until his father came back to report.

He went to school a few days, worked about the cabin, snared a few birds for dinner, chopped wood or fished and did a good deal of thinking things over, while his mother went out to shoot a deer to keep the family in meat.

At last his father came back. He had not met with real good luck, he said. Somehow, he never did. When he had poled his raft into the broad Ohio River, the current had floated the wobbly craft against some sunken snags, tipped it, turned it over, and spilled Thomas Lincoln, his carpenter's kit, his furniture and his ten barrels of whiskey, into the river.

For once in his life he worked hard. People came to his aid and, after much fishing and dragging, the kit of carpenter's tools and the most of the whiskey and furniture were pulled ashore, loaded on an ox-cart and carried through the forests to an "oak-opening" where there was a settler's cabin, about eight miles from the river.

Then, so Thomas told his family, after he had taken care

of his rescued goods, he walked straight into the forest to hunt up a spot for a home. He had found a place, he declared, that just suited him, as it would them, and they must all get ready to go at once with him to Indiana.

It did not take the Lincolns long to get ready. All that they had to pack up were a few pots, pans and kettles, some bedding and less clothes. These they loaded on the backs of two borrowed horses, and, trudging along on foot, they pushed into the western forests on the way to their Indiana home, ninety miles away.

"LIVED LIKE GYPSIES."

Through thickets and underbrush, fording, swimming or rafting rivers, living like gypsies, plodding along like tramps, they finally reached the settler's cabin where Thomas Lincoln had stored his cargo of shipwrecked goods. There they managed to hire or borrow a wagon, loaded it with their little stock of worldly goods, and literally chopping a path through the dense forests they finally reached the spot which Thomas Lincoln had selected for their home.

It sounds very adventurous and "pic-nicky," does it not? No doubt little Abraham enjoyed the excitement and novelty of this kind of "house-moving," but often, I imagine, he was

tired, wet, cold, footsore and uncomfortable, and wondered when they would get to the end of their hard journey.

The end came at last. The place selected by Abraham's father was near the stream called Little Pigeon Creek, a mile and a half from the present town of Gentryville in Spencer County, Southern Indiana.

It was a grassy knoll in the heart of a vast forest. But the father assured his family that it was just the spot for them; the land, he said, was rich and fertile, the forests were full of game, the creek was alive with fish, and all they had to do was to settle down and make themselves a home.

The first thing needful was a house. But, though Thomas Lincoln was a carpenter, he had no desire to spend much time on a building.

"We'll just put up a half-faced camp, now," he said; "and, later on, we'll run up something better."

Now, a half-faced camp is a good-enough shelter for a summer night in the woods; but who would think of living in such a thing, not for a week or a month only, but for a year and more — including a cold winter?

Take four uprights for four corner posts — the two rear ones being higher than the front ones; from the forked tops of these corner posts stretch four others across to form the edges of the roof; lay some others across these edge pieces to make a sloping roof, and cover these with thin slabs or "edgings" to keep out the rain; around their sides, set up poles close together and "chink in" between them with chips

or clay; hang up some deer skins along the lowest front — and there you have a half-faced camp. It is scarcely shelter enough for a horse or a cow; and yet, in such a rough, cold and comfortless hut did the Lincoln family live for more than a year — summer and winter, just because the "head of the house" was too lazy to put up anything better.

It was the first Indiana home of Abraham Lincoln. Scarcely the sort of a place, was it, that one would think of as the first step toward the stately White House at Washington?

CHAPTER II.

A BOY OF THE BACKWOODS.

THE future president of the United States was eight years old when he spent the winter with his father, mother and sister in the "half-faced camp" on Pigeon Creek.

He was growing fast. Already he was a long-legged, spindling, uncouth little fellow, with a shock of black hair, dreamy-looking eyes, a hatchet face, and a skin tanned and sallow from his out-door life.

He was not a pretty boy; I doubt, even, if he was

healthy-looking. But his muscles were hard and tough; he was sturdy, strong and wiry; and he could endure cold and heat, poor food and privation, even better than many a trained athlete who, to-day, puts himself into what is called "condition."

He wore a homespun shirt of cotton and wool, woven by his mother and colored with a dye made from roots and bark; he had deerskin breeches and a deerskin hunting-shirt, while his feet, when he did not go barefoot, were shod with deerskin moccasins; on his head was a queer cap cut from a raccoon skin with the tail left on and hanging down the back of the boy's neck.

This was Abraham Lincoln, dressed in the best his mother could do — a boy of the frontier, in the days when there were few necessities, less comforts, and no advantages for boys and girls; when life was hard and home was dreary, and men and women were rough, careless, uncultivated and uncouth — the western backwoods life of eighty years ago.

Be glad, boys and girls, that you have comfortable homes, pleasant schools, and all the advantages that wealth and progress and what is called public spirit have secured, largely through the energy, the sacrifices and the ambition of the men and women of those hard days of rough living.

It was, indeed, rough living in the Lincoln home on Little Pigeon Creek. When he was "good and ready" Thomas Lincoln set about building a better shelter for his family than the forlorn "half-faced camp."

The new building was not such a great improvement; but it was more like a house. It was a rough cabin of logs, without door, window or floor. But it seemed so much better than the shanty in which they had been living, that Abraham and his sister felt quite princely.

The boy had helped at building the new house; and

"THIS WAS ABRAHAM LINCOLN DRESSED IN HIS BEST."

when it was finished and he could climb up to the loft by the ladder of pegs which he had driven into the logs, he would fling himself down on his bed of dried leaves and think it all quite comfortable and homelike.

You would have turned up your nose at such accommodations and said you never could feel at home in such a place; but little Abraham Lincoln had never known anything better. To him, the home-made furniture of three-legged stools, rickety pole-bedstead built into the logs, and

hewn-log table were sufficient to sit on, sleep on and eat on. What more could a boy need?

The new home was in a great game country. All one needed to do for meat was to go out and shoot it — deer or bear or partridge or turkey; there were fish to be caught in the streams near by; in the cleared land around the house was raised enough corn to grind into meal.

"You have a roof to cover you, a bed to sleep on and plenty to eat," his father would say; "what more can a boy want?"

A boy needs and wants more than just enough to keep himself alive. If he did not, he would be no better off than the wild beasts of the woods. Contentment, we are told, is better than wealth; but if men and women, if boys and girls, were perfectly satisfied with just what they had and did not have the desire to better themselves there would be no such thing as progress and the world would never improve. So let us be thankful that this poor little boy of the Indiana backwoods did wish for better things.

That he did so, you may be certain. The whole story of his life is based on a desire for improvement. He never was one to complain. But the things his mother had told him gave him the knowledge that there were, in the world, plenty of opportunities for wide-awake boys to get ahead. And, even as a little fellow, he got to thinking, as so many boys do, what he would be and what he would do when he was a man.

Even as a boy he was a thoughtful little fellow. He loved to go out into the great woods that stretched all about his home, and to lie on his back and — just think! I imagine, from what we know of his story, that he liked this sort of thing better than splitting wood or lugging water or feeding the animals — in fact, better than work. But that shows us, does it not, that he was just a boy; for no boy really loves to work.

GOING TO BED.

His life was lonely enough in that wilderness; but, before many months, he had company. His Uncle and Aunt Sparrow and his boy cousin, Dennis Hanks, came from Kentucky to try their luck in Indiana. Abraham's father gave them the old "half-faced camp" as a home, and so the Lincolns had near neighbors.

But before the winter set in there came sad days to both houses. A terrible sickness — what we call an epidemic — visited that section of Indiana. Many people died from it, and among these were, first, Uncle and Aunt Sparrow, and then Mrs. Lincoln, the mother of Abraham.

The nearest doctor was thirty-five miles away, and they had no money to pay him or spend in medicine, even if he

could have come to them. The dreadful malaria that is present in all swampy lands weakened the invalids; they were ill-fed, poorly housed and without any of the comforts that sick people need; so they speedily fell victims to the epidemic.

It was a terrible blow to the Lincoln children. Their father was not fitted to care for them or be tender to them; and they had grown to depend upon their sad-faced, hard-working mother for instruction, help and companionship. She could not give them much, if any, of these things; but what little she could do for them she did cheerfully and, when she was taken from them, they were poor indeed.

They buried her in the forest. No clergyman was within call; her husband himself made her rough coffin; and, many a time, little neglected Abraham would sit by the mound that was his mother's forest grave and cry, long and bitterly, wishing her back again.

The life of the mother of Abraham Lincoln had been a hard and dreary one. She had known little but poverty, worry and work. But she dearly loved her forlorn and ragged little nine-year-old son, and it was to him that she turned as she was dying and gave her last message.

"Be kind to father and sister," she said, placing her hand on the boy's head; "be good to each other, won't you? I've tried to teach you to do so. I hope you'll live, Abe, to remember your mother, love your folks and pray to God."

To-day, a stone monument marks the grave of Nancy Lincoln, on a little knoll half a mile from where her shabby

log hut of a home once stood. For long years, her grave was unmarked, but the memory of her patient life and her desire for her children's welfare ever lived with her famous son, even when, years after, he spoke of the story of his childhood days as being only what a famous poet once described as

"The short and simple annals of the poor."

What boy or girl knows from what noble poem this line is taken? It was a favorite poem with Abraham Lincoln.

Little Dennis Hanks, having lost his protectors also, came into the Lincoln family, and the long winter that followed Mrs. Lincoln's death was dreary and gloomy and empty enough to those three lonely children.

The boy Abraham felt especially grieved that no clergyman had held a service or preached a funeral sermon above his mother's grave. He thought over the matter a long time and, one day, he wrote what was, I believe, really his first letter. It was to the good minister whom he remembered in the old Kentucky home, miles away, and it begged him to come into Indiana and hold a memorial service for Nancy Lincoln.

The kindly clergyman wrote to the boy promising to visit the Lincoln home when he next made a journey into Indiana; and, sure enough, when the next summer came, "Parson Elkins," as he was called, did come to the little settlement and, when the people had gathered from far and

near, he preached the funeral sermon, as he had promised the lonely boy, who so remembered and honored the mother he had lost.

It was, I imagine, a pretty poor kind of housekeeping they had in that shiftless home on Little Pigeon Creek, after the mother of the home had been taken away. Sarah, the eldest child, was only twelve; Abraham was but ten, and little Dennis Hanks was eight.

Sarah tried to "keep house"; and her father, in his careless way, tried to help her. But about all they could do was to keep from going hungry. Deer-meat broiled on the coals of the wood-fire, ash-cakes made of corn-meal, with, now and then, a slab of pork was their only bill of fare. About all the pleasure that little Abraham found, when he was not trying to keep from being cold and hungry, was in his books.

How many do you think he had? Just three: the Bible, Æsop's Fables and the Pilgrim's Progress. Think of that, you boys and girls who have more books than you can read, and for whom the printing presses are always hard at work.

The boy knew those three books almost by heart. He could repeat whole chapters of the Bible, many parts of the Pilgrim's Progress and every one of Æsop's Fables; and he never forgot them.

Thomas Lincoln knew that the uncomfortable state of affairs in his log cabin could not long continue, or his home, such as it was, would go to wrack and ruin. So, one day,

he bade the children good-bye and told them he was going back to Kentucky on a visit.

How under the sun those three children got along, all alone, in their lonely home while their father was away, I don't know. But perhaps, it was quite as easy for them as when he was about the house.

"HE BADE THE CHILDREN GOOD-BYE."

He was away for weeks; but when Thomas Lincoln returned from his Kentucky visit, in December, 1819, he brought back a new wife to look after his home and be a mother to his motherless children.

It was one of the best things he ever did. The second Mrs. Lincoln was an excellent woman. People spoke of her as a "poor widow"; but she was really rich, in the eyes of the three neglected children, whom she took to her heart as soon as she saw them — forlorn and ragged and dirty though they were.

She brought with her, from Kentucky, the things most needed to brighten up that shiftless home — a kind heart, go-ahead ways, and decent furniture.

This last included a bureau and a table, chairs and "cooking things," a clothes-chest, bedding, knives and forks, and other things that you could not do without, but which, up to that time, the Lincoln children had never known.

She had three children of her own — a boy and two girls; but she never made any difference between them and the three motherless children into whose home she had come. She knew just how to keep them all in hand, and just how to go to work to make that home a united and happy one — humble and poor though it was.

If you have ever read Dickens's story of poor little David Copperfield, you will remember that, when that small runaway tramp appeared in his aunt's home, she asked funny Mr. Dick what she should do with the boy, and Mr. Dick promptly suggested "wash him." Mrs. Lincoln was quite as practical as Mr. Dick, for the first thing she did for little Abraham Lincoln was to wash him!

Then, out of her own little stock of clothing, she made for the boy warm, clean clothes; she took his part when his father abused or scolded him, and, in fact, made life so much more pleasant and agreeable for Abraham that, from that time on, the boy, so we are told, "appeared to lead a new life."

She had a good influence, too, on the boy's shiftless do-

nothing father. She made him fix up that dreary little house at once. Urged on by her, he laid a floor in the cabin, where only hard earth had been before; he put a door and window in the house, and brought about something like comfort where, before, there had scarcely been even security. In fact, as little Dennis Hanks said, many years after, the new mother so changed things in a few weeks' time, that, "where everything was wanting, now all was snug and comfortable."

"SOMETHING LIKE COMFORT."

Mrs. Lincoln seemed to take an especial liking for the little ten-year old Abraham. She saw something in the boy that made her feel sure that a little trying would do wonders for him.

Having first made him clean and comfortable, she next made him intelligent, bright and good. She managed to

send him to school for a few months. The little log schoolhouse, close by the meeting house, to which the traveling schoolmaster would come to give four weeks' schooling was scarcely high enough for a man to stand straight in; it had holes for windows and greased paper to take the place of glass. But, in such a place Abraham Lincoln "got his schooling," for a few weeks only, in "reading, writing and cipher-ing;" here he was, again and again, head of his class; and here he "spelled down" all the big boys and girls in the exciting contests called "spelling matches."

THE TRAVELING SCHOOLMASTER.

He was ten years old now and growing "like a weed." People declared, when he was twelve years old, that you could almost see him grow. He seemed all legs and arms. He grew so fast, after he got into his teens, that, when he was fifteen, he was six feet, four inches high.

The care that his stepmother gave for his health and mind soon began to show for itself. He was long; he was strong; he was wiry. He was never sick, was always good-natured, never a bully, always the friend of the weak, the small and the unprotected — and the girls.

He must have been a funny-looking boy. His skin was sallow and his hair was black. He wore a linsey-woolsey

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HIS SHINGLE SCRAP BOOK.

shirt, buckskin breeches, a coon-skin cap and heavy "clumps" of shoes. He grew so fast that his breeches never came down to the tops of his shoes, and, instead of stockings, you could always see "twelve inches of shinbone," sharp, blue and narrow. He laughed much, was always ready to give and take jokes and hard knocks, had a squeaky, changing voice, a small head, big ears — and was always what Thackeray called "a gentle-man." Such was Abraham Lincoln at fifteen.

He was never cruel, mean or unkind. His first composition was on cruelty to animals, written because he had tried to make the other boys stop "teasin' tarrypins" — that is, catching turtles and putting hot coals on their backs just to make them move along lively.

He had to work hard at home; for his father would not, and things needed to be attended to if "the place" was to be kept from dropping to pieces.

He became a great reader. He read every book and newspaper he could get hold of and, if he came across anything in his reading that he wished to remember, he would copy it on a shingle, because writing paper was scarce, and either learn it by heart or hide the shingle away until he could get some paper to copy it on.

His father thought he read too much.

"It'll sp'ile him for work," he said. "He don't do half enough about the place, as it is, now, and books and papers ain't no good."

But Abraham, with all his reading, did more work than

his father any day; his stepmother, too, took his side and at last got her husband to let the boy read and study at home.

"Abe was a good son to me," she said many, many years after, "and we took particular care when he was reading not to disturb him. We would just let him read on and on till he quit of his own accord."

The boy kept a sort of shingle scrap-book; he kept a paper scrap-book, too. Into these he would put whatever he cared to keep — poetry, history, funny sayings, fine passages.

He had a scrap-book for his arithmetic "sums" too, and one of these is still in existence with this boyish rhyme in a boyish scrawl, underneath one of his tables of weights and measures:

Abraham Lincoln
his hand and pen
he will be good but
god knows When.

God did know when; and that boy, all unconsciously, was working toward the day when his hand and pen were to do more for humanity than any other hand or pen of modern times.

Lamps and candles were almost unknown in his home, and Abraham, flat on his stomach, would often do his reading, writing and ciphering in the firelight, as it flashed and flickered on the big hearth of his log-cabin home. An older cousin, John Hanks,who lived for a while with the Lincolns, says that when "Abe," as he always called the great president, would come home, as a boy, from his work, he would go to

the cupboard, take a piece of corn bread for his supper, sit down on a chair, stretch out his long legs until they were higher than his head — and read, and read, and read.

"Abe and I," said John Hanks, "worked barefoot; grubbed it, ploughed it, mowed and cradled it; ploughed corn, gathered corn, and shucked corn, and Abe read constantly, whenever he could get a chance."

"HE WAS A GREAT READER."

One day Abraham found that a man for whom he sometimes worked owned a copy of Weems's "Life of Washington." This was a famous book in its day. Abraham borrowed it at once. When he was not reading it, he put it away on a shelf — a clapboard resting on wooden pins. There was a big crack between the logs, behind the shelf, and, one rainy day, the "Life of Washington" fell into the crack and was soaked almost into pulp. Old Mr. Crawford, from whom Abraham borrowed the book, was a cross, cranky and sour old fellow, and when the boy told

him of the accident he said Abraham must "work the book out."

The boy agreed, and the old farmer kept him so strictly to his promise that he made him "pull fodder" for the cattle three days, as payment for the book! And that is the way that Abraham Lincoln bought his first book. For he dried the copy of Weems's "Life of Washington" and put it in his "library." But what boy or girl of to-day would like to buy books at such a price?

This was the boy-life of Abraham Lincoln. It was a life of poverty, privation, hard work, little play and less money. The boy did not love work. But he worked. His father was rough and often harsh and hard to him, and what Abraham learned was by making the most of his spare time.

He was inquisitive, active and hardy, and, in his comfortless boyhood, he was learning lessons of self-denial, independence, pluck, shrewdness, kindness and persistence.

These were the very things to do such a boy good. They developed his real character and helped to build him up. They were the very things that made him the ambitious, large-hearted, strong-souled, loving and kindly man he afterwards rounded into, and they fitted him to "endure all things" as he rose to eminence and fame.

CHAPTER III.

HOW ABRAHAM SAW THE WORLD.

EVERY boy is a dreamer. He is continually thinking about what he would like to do, or what he will surely do "when I'm a man!"

The more there is to him, the more is it possible for him to make his dream come true.

There is a legend, still accepted around Abraham Lincoln's boyhood home, that the young fellow always declared that "some day" he was going to be "president of the United States."

If he did say so, it may have been just his "funning"; but he dreamed of it, nevertheless, and determined to be more of a man than was his shiftless father.

Abraham was not much of a carpenter; that must be confessed. But he was wise enough to acknowledge this and to declare that he would not be a carpenter when he became a man. He used to work in his father's shop — when he had to. In fact, there is still in existence, in an Indiana home, a little walnut cabinet, about two feet high and containing two rows of drawers, that was made by Abraham Lincoln and his father in their "shop."

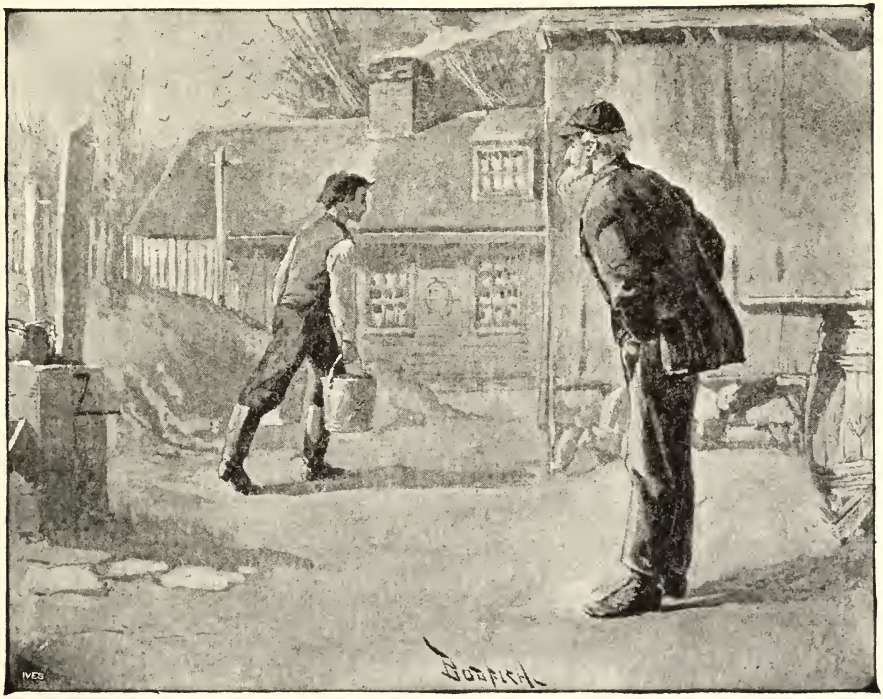
Just because he did not mean to be a carpenter he kept away from the shop as much as possible and "hired out" to work among the neighbors. Until he was twenty-one, of course, his wages belonged to his father, and I imagine Abraham, himself, never had much to show for his work before he became of age.

He was such a willing, good-natured, handy young fellow that he was known and liked in every cabin and every farm-house between "the forks" of Big Pigeon and Little Pigeon Creeks. He could build a fire, carry water, chop wood, 'tend the baby or do any needed "chores" for the women; he could split rails, plough, mow, reap or sow for the men. He was a "master hand" with the axe. From the time he was ten years old, so he tells us, he was "almost constantly handling that most useful instrument." And when he was working or when he was "loafing" — and he did enjoy this — he always had a story to tell about what he had seen or heard or read.

When he was sixteen years old he ran a ferry-boat across the mouth of Anderson Creek, where it empties into the Ohio river. The ferry was owned by a man named Taylor, and young Lincoln, when he was not paddling the boat, did chore-work about the farm. His wages were six dollars a month.

He earned them. During the nine months that he worked for Mr. Taylor, he was hostler, plough-boy, ferry-man and farm-hand, when he was out of the house; when

he was in-doors, he did everything, from running the hand-mill that ground the corn into meal for the family, to "fixing things" about the kitchen like any maid-of-all-work. He slept in the loft with the Taylor boy, and took the "bull-ing" of his employer's son good-naturedly. Once, however,



"HE WAS 'HIRED-MAN' AND 'CHORE-BOY.'"

he confesses he did "get mad" when the boy beat him over the head with an ear of corn. But he did not "thrash" his tormenter, as he could easily have done, because, you see, the Taylor boy was not so big as he.

From ferrying, he took to other work wherever he could "get a job." He earned thirty-one cents a day killing hogs

"in hog-time," and did this so satisfactorily that the farmers all liked to have him "help butcher."

He hired out to cross old Mr. Crawford, who had made him pay for the water-soaked "Life of Washington;" but he enjoyed working there because he got a chance to read all Mr. Crawford's books — though this "all" was not much of a library. He learned everything he could from these

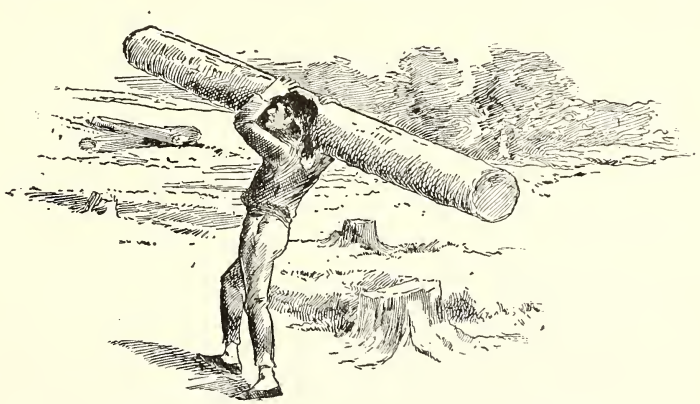
ON THE FARM.

books, however, copying the parts he liked, with a burnt stick on a wooden shovel. But he never could like cranky Mr. Crawford who "docked him" whenever he "missed time," and it is said that the boy revenged himself on his stingy employer by making up verses about Crawford's big nose, until the nose, which was an enormous one, and the verses, which were very poor, became famous all the country round. It wasn't really a nice thing to do, but it was just like a mischievous boy.

Abraham's long arms were as strong as iron and his long legs were as steady as tree trunks. He was a champion wrestler, just as Washington had been, and he could "throw"

even his employer in a friendly "rassle," every time he tried. Though a hard worker he was a slow one — sometimes to Mrs. Crawford's disgust; for she was heard to declare, when at last Lincoln had grown to fame, "Wal', Abe wasn't no hand to pitch into his work like killin' snakes."

The boy liked to hang around the house after meal time before going out to work with "old Crawford." But he would not shirk his duty; for, after he had joked and gossiped with the girls as long as he felt that he dared, he would unwind his long legs from the chair-rungs, jump up and say, "Well, this won't buy the child a coat, will it?" and stride out to the fields.



"ABE" CARRYING THE CORN-CRIB POST.

"Abe" Lincoln was, like Washington, very strong. He could carry easily a load that three men would stagger under. He once picked up and walked away with a chicken-coop that weighed six hundred pounds; and, another time, when he saw four men making a litter of sticks on which to carry the great posts that were to support a new corn-crib, Lincoln, without any help, shouldered the posts and took them to the spot where they were to be used.

He liked fun, and he made it. I have told you of his "poetry" about Mr. Crawford's nose. I am afraid when young "Abe Lincoln" found that those verses "took" so well, that he indulged in the same sort of fun toward some other people he knew. He was always ready to "spout," as the boys called it; he delighted to jump on a stump, in the midst of the hardest work in the field or the clearing, and set the boys and men to laughing or applauding his comic "stump speeches," until the exasperated farmer who was "bossing the job" would haul the young orator down with words that were no gentler than his hands. Mrs. Crawford, indeed, was not the only one who declared, in after years, that her now famous "chore-boy" did'nt like to "pitch in" when he worked. We have the record of still another employer to the effect that "Abe liked his dinner and his pay better than his work."

But you know the old rhyme that tells us that

"All work and no play
Make Jack a dull boy."

It was this rough, back country "play," this fun and frolic and foolishness interspersed with his hard work that kept Abraham Lincoln from being dull. He was "just a boy;" just such another healthy, growing boy, as in all ages of the world, has always preferred fun and his meals to hard work.

But Lincoln's mind was working all through this "hob-

bledehoy" period. He loved to read, to study and to improve himself. He learned slowly, at first; but by regular stages of growth, he taught himself gradually to think clearly, to reason out things and to give himself, what we call, a "logical mind." It is not the brilliant boys and the prize scholars who make the best mark in the world; it is the patient and persistent ones, who stick to a thing until they understand and master it, and learn, by practice, how to do and how to say things with the best results. Young Abraham Lincoln kept "pegging away," and he never forgot what he had learned by application and hard work. He educated himself to remember; as a result, his memory, when he grew to manhood, was remarkably clear and correct.

"HE WAS ALWAYS READY TO 'SPOUT.'"

He was so fair, so honest, so true, so kindly and so just in his relations with those about him that he became a leader among the boys and young men of his neighborhood.

He liked company; he liked to "sit around" in the kitchens or the store better than to go off hunting with the boys or roam by himself in the woods. Even this, however, was part of his schooling. For this social, sky-larking, gossipy, hail-fellow side of young Abraham Lincoln's nature taught him to know men and women.

He lived a hard life in a rough country, where every man and woman, every boy and girl were workers, with but few amusements — and these not always high-toned, gentle or refined. But young Abraham Lincoln was good, lovable, kind-hearted, generous, pleasant-spirited and conscientious — and all that makes a pretty fair boy! It kept him from yielding to low tastes and evil thoughts; by elevating him in mind it so led him to improve every opportunity that he soon became just enough dissatisfied with his surroundings to make up his mind to amount to something more than a chore-boy, a day-laborer or a "hired-man."

The boy was what is called a "shrewd observer." He studied men and women as well as books. His ability to adapt himself to circumstances as it is called — that is to say, to make the best of everything, gave him such a knowledge of the characters of men and women that, as he grew to manhood, he knew just how to "take" people, as we say. He could "size up" men as well as boys, and could see the good as well as the bad that was in them. He could turn this knowledge to good account, both for his own purposes and for those of his community — and, in later years, of the nation.

This ability to make the most from his surroundings, to take part in whatever fun was going on, to do his share, whether in work or frolic, made "Abe Lincoln," as every one called him, popular with all the young people of his little neighborhood.

He was a leader in all the "goings on." I have told you of his great strength, his skill as a wrestler, his pleasure in hearing or telling stories, his readiness to "talk over" things and his love of mimicry, verse-making and "stump" oratory. He would work hard when he had to; he could turn his hand to almost anything; but he could always be depended upon to join in any of the boyish games that were set on foot by the boys of the village.

Some of these games were such as all boys and girls enjoy — running, jumping, "stumping," "follow your leader" and such sports; others had such odd names as "cat," "throwing the mall," "hopping and half-hammer," "bull-pen," "old sister Feby," "four-corner bull-pen" — home-made games, the most of them. Perhaps the boys and girls of the the West can explain some of these to their cousins of the East and South — can you?

In such of these games as called for skill and strength, for agility, quickness of hand and eye, Abraham Lincoln was an acknowledged leader. He was the champion athlete, and few could "down" him in a tussle or distance him in a race.

As I have told you, he was a great reader. What he read, he remembered, and he used his knowledge for the bene-

fit or amusement of his comrades. They looked upon him as an "awfully smart chap," and he was certain to be asked to all the gatherings and merry-makings of the neighborhood; there his ready joke, his quick wit, his lively stories, his knowledge of what to say and how to do things could all be made the most of. Few corn-shuckings, log-rollings, shooting-matches,

"HE WAS THE CHAMPION WRESTLER AND NOT A SAFE FELLOW TO 'TACKLE.'"

house-raisings or country-weddings were held without "Abe Lincoln," and the boys always expected some report of the affair in "Abe's poetry" or "chronicle."

The town nearest to his home was a little village called Gentryville. In this place there was, of course, a village store; this, the grocery and the blacksmith's shop, furnished the favorite "loafing-places" for the boys of the neighborhood.

"Abe" was, of course, one of these boys, and there were

A SHOOTING-MATCH ON THE BORDER.

the usual "carryings-on" when they met after work. These, in almost every case, included "stumping" one another to feats of boyish strength — lifting, jumping, pushing weights, wrestling, etc., or singing, telling stories and, I am afraid, some "grog drinking."

Such places have ruined many easily-tempted or weak-minded boys; but those who, like young Lincoln, had strength of character or good common-sense, were not to be spoiled by such mixed associations.

To the credit of Abraham Lincoln, also, be it said, that, although brought up in "drinking-days" and drinking neighborhoods, where the well-filled whiskey-jug was a feature of every home, he rarely touched liquor and always abhorred intemperance. He could always say "no, I thank you;" and this habit of abstinence continued all through his eventful life.

The store in Gentryville was "kept" by a man named Jones. He was the leading "merchant" and "business man" of the village. Young Abe Lincoln did "odd jobs" for him so satisfactorily that, at last, he made the boy a sort of assistant-clerk in his store, took an interest in the young fellow, talked politics, business and general affairs with him, let him "'tend store" and in a way, as we say, "brought him out."

This taste of business led young Abraham Lincoln to wish to strike out for himself; so, when another leading man of the neighborhood — the Mr. Gentry for whom the village

was named and for whom Abe had done considerable work at odd times — determined to load a flat-boat and send it "down river" to New Orleans, offered Abe a place as 'bow hand," and the boy at once accepted the opportunity.

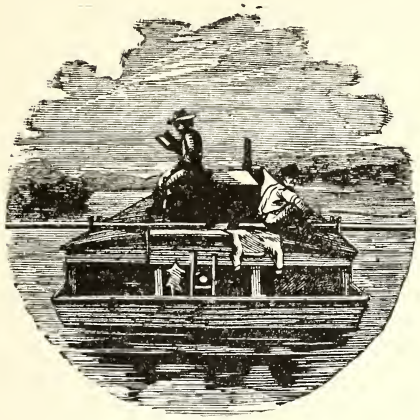
It was quite an event in his life. Abraham Lincoln was now nineteen years old; he was tall and awkward, but he was wiry, strong and reliable. He was, so Mr. Gentry thought, just the fellow to work the "front oar" on his flat-boat.

LINCOLN "'TENDING STORE."

The flat-boat of seventy years ago was an ungainly-looking craft. It was long, wide and heavy, flat-bottomed and clumsy; it was simply a great scow; but it was strongly built; it would carry much freight, and could slide over the snags and shallows, where a keel-boat never could go. It would float with the current, steered or guided by long oars at either end. It could not be worked against the stream, however; so the crew generally came back from their journey's end by steamboat, leaving the useless flat-boat to be sold for some other use or split into kindling wood at the port to which it had floated.

Mr. Gentry loaded his clumsy craft with a cargo of bacon

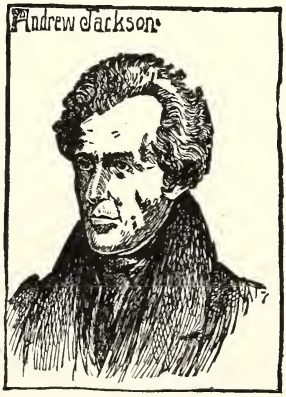
and other Indiana produce. Abraham's wages were to be eight dollars a month, and he was to live on the boat.



A FLAT-BOAT CRUISE.

It was a long, slow voyage down Pigeon Creek to the Ohio, then down to the Mississippi, and then, down the great river one thousand miles to the sea. But the boy enjoyed it all and used his eyes and ears to excellent advantage.

He saw the varied life of the river, the farms, the river towns, the broad plantations and the old French city at its mouth, over which had floated, in turn, the flags of France, of Spain and of the United States, and where, when Abraham Lincoln was five years old, General Andrew Jackson had fought the British behind his rampart of cotton bales.

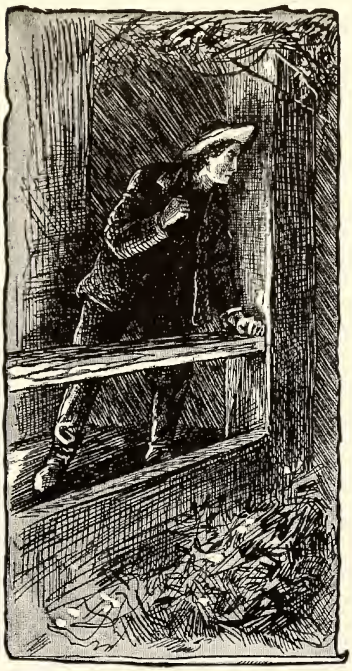


THE HERO OF THE COTTON BALES.

The trip was without special adventure to the boys who made up the crew of "Gentry's flat-boat," until one night when the craft lay just below the town of Baton Rouge. It was tied to the river bank, along which stretched the plantation of a wealthy creole woman named Madame Duchesne.

The two boys were asleep in the little shelter that served as a cabin, in the stern of the boat. Suddenly, they heard a noise on the boat and found that they were set upon by negro river thieves.

The over-confident darkies did not know the strength of arm of the young giant they had roused. Lincoln seized a club, though his comrade told him to take a gun; then, falling upon the marauders, he drove them off the flat-boat and chased them far ashore.



"THEY CUT HER ADRIFT AND FLOATED DOWN THE RIVER."

It was the victory of two to seven. But it was dark and the conquerors did not care to risk another fight. Hurrying back to their boat, the boys cut her adrift and floated down the river, wounded but victorious. And the tall, lank, long-limbed backwoods boy carried, all his life, a scar on his forehead to tell of his first pitched battle — and it was with men of the very race whom he afterwards made forever free.

He was, in truth, a long and lank young fellow. Before he was eighteen he "got his growth," as the saying is. He was very tall — six feet and four inches. He was very thin; indeed, one of the Gentryville girls who used to make fun of his looks, as girls will, says he was "a long, thin, leggy, gawky boy, dried up and shrivelled."

Perhaps that was because she found that "Abe," as she called him, was, "giving himself airs" on his learning; for, sitting on that very flat-boat at Gentry's Landing one evening, "Abe" had told her that the earth turned around and that the sun and moon did not really sink, as they seemed to. The girl, of course, thought that she knew better and told the boy so; but, years after, she said, "I know now that I was the fool, and not Abe Lincoln."

The flat-boat voyage to New Orleans was a successful one. The two boys sold all their cargo, disposed of the boat, and came back up the river by steamer — successful traders and travelers. Abraham had seen the world; he had gone a step further from the old rut of "farm-hand," out of which he determined to get entirely, when he became a man.

He was almost a man by this time. Tall, wiry and strong, a champion wrestler and not a safe fellow for any boy or man to "tackle," he was a prominent figure in the little world about Gentryville. He had read and studied so much that he knew more than all the boys and girls of Gentryville put together. He was a ready talker, a great story-teller, the life of every circle, whether at the country store, the blacksmith's shop, the house-raising or the husking-bee. The bullies were all afraid of his long arms and terrible fists; the girls all liked him; the men preferred him to all other "hired, men" on the farm work, and the women found him ever handy, willing and helpful.

He was not a genius. He was slow, but sure. Whenever

he set about learning anything he kept at it until he knew it completely. Some of his early writing actually found its way into print, and one "piece," on national politics, was declared, by a lawyer to whom it was shown, to be so good that he carried it off and had it published in the papers. "The world can't beat it!" the lawyer declared, and Lincoln was, of course, very proud of this criticism, and still more proud of thus "getting into print." Knowing what you do of the future of this long-legged, awkward, gawky but "thorough" country boy, you will say that the "piece" was a good introduction to the principles that, in after years, made Abraham Lincoln famous. For this "piece," as everybody then called any written composition, maintained that "the American Government was the best form of government for an intelligent people; that it ought to be kept sound, and preserved forever; that general education should be fostered and carried all over the country; that the constitution should be saved, the Union perpetuated and the laws revered, respected and enforced."

"EVER WILLING, HANDY AND HELPFUL."

Not a bad beginning, was it, for a boy brought up without education, without advantages, without opportunity, with nothing but a clear mind, a cool head, a thoughtful nature, unbounded pluck, and a determination to get ahead?

Yet that is the best sort of foundation to build upon. Any boy, so furnished, can achieve great results even from small beginnings. It was this building-up of himself that made Abraham Lincoln a fresh creation — original, self-made, ambitious, reliable, a real leader, a true and noble man, *the* American.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE RAIL-SPLITTER RAISED HIMSELF.

BOYS and girls always like change. To them, it means new places to explore, new sights to see, new things to do. As they grow older, it means, so they think, a better chance to get on in the world.

When, therefore, restless Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham, decided to change his home once more and try his luck in the neighboring state of Illinois, young Abraham was quite ready to make the change. Boy-like, he thought, no doubt, that there would be a better opening for a young man in the new surroundings.

His good step-mother was quite ready to move. The same epidemic, or sickness, that had killed Abraham's own mother visited that Indiana neighborhood again; indeed, it was there a great part of the time, and—"Wal', folks say as how it's right healthy over in Illinoy," so Abraham's father declared.

A "VANDOO."

In the Spring of 1830, therefore, there was another "moving time" for the Lincolns. The corn and the cattle, the farm and its hogs were all sold at public "vandoo," or auction, at low figures; and with all their household goods on a big "ironed" wagon drawn by four oxen, the three related families of Hanks, Hall and Lincoln, thirteen in all, pushed on through the mud and across rivers, high from the spring freshets, out of Indiana, into Illinois.

Abraham held the "gad" and guided the oxen. He carried with him, also, a little stock of pins, needles, thread and buttons. These he peddled along the way; and, at last, after fifteen days of slow travel, the emigrants came to the spot picked out for a home.

This time it was on a small bluff on the north fork of the Sangamon river, ten miles west of the town of Decatur. The usual log house was built; the boys, with the oxen, "broke up," or cleared, fifteen acres of land, and split enough rails to fence it in. Abraham could swing his broad-axe better than any man or boy in the West; at one stroke he could bury the axe-blade to the haft, in a log, and he was already famous as an expert rail-splitter.

By the time his people were settled in their new home, Abraham Lincoln was twenty-one. He was "of age"—he was a man! By the law of the land he was freed from his father's control; he could shift for himself, and he determined to do so.

This did not mean that he disliked his father. It simply means that he had no intention of following his father's example. Thomas Lincoln had demanded all the work and all the wages his son could do or earn, and Abraham felt that he could not have a fair chance to accomplish anything or get ahead in the world if he continued living with this shiftless, never-satisfied, do-nothing man.

So he struck out for himself. But, lest you should imagine that he "went back on" his family, as you boys say, or

forgot his duty to them, especially to the good woman who was his step-mother, let me say that, to the day of his death, he was always helping them — and he was never a rich man, never even what folks call "well-to-do."

In the summer of 1830, Abraham left home and hired out on his own account, wherever he could get a job in the new country into which he had come. In that region of big farms

"ABRAHAM WAS ALREADY FAMOUS AS AN EXPERT RAIL-SPLITTER."

and no fences, these latter were needed, and Abraham Lincoln's stalwart arm and well-swung axe came well into play, cutting up logs for fences. He was what was called in that western country a "rail-splitter." Indeed, one of the first things he did when he struck out for himself was to split four hundred rails for every yard of "blue jeans" necessary to make him a pair of trousers. From which it will be seen that work was easier to get than clothes.

He soon became as much of a favorite in Illinois as he had been in Indiana. Other work came to him, and, in 1831, he "hired out" with a man named Offutt to help sail a flat-boat down the Mississippi to New Orleans.

Mr. Offutt had heard that "Abe Lincoln" was a good river-hand, strong, steady, honest, reliable, accustomed to boating and that he had already made one trip down the river.

So he engaged young Lincoln at what seemed to the young rail-splitter princely wages — fifty cents a day, and a third share in the sixty dollars which was to be divided among the three boatmen at the end of the trip.

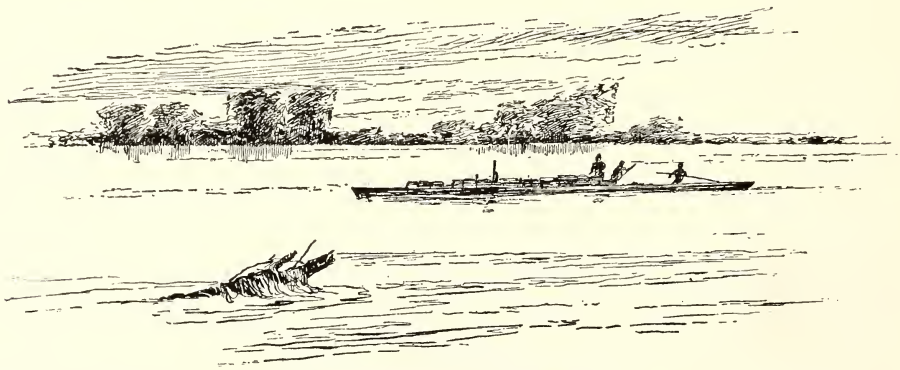
They built the flat-boat at a saw mill near a place called Sangamon-town, "Abe" serving as cook of the camp while the boat was being built.

Then, loading the craft with barrel-pork, hogs and corn, they started on their voyage south. At a place called New Salem the flat-boat ran aground; but Lincoln's ingenuity got it off. He rigged up a queer contrivance of his own invention and lifted the boat off and over the obstruction, while all New Salem stood on the bank, first to criticise and then to applaud.

Just what this invention was I cannot explain. But if you ever go into the patent office at Washington, ask to see Abraham Lincoln's patent for transporting river boats over snags and shoals. The wooden model is there; for, so pleased was Lincoln with his success that he thought seri-

ously of becoming an inventor, and his first design was the patent granted to him in 1849, the idea for which grew out of this successful floating of Offutt's flat-boat over the river snags at New Salem nineteen years before.

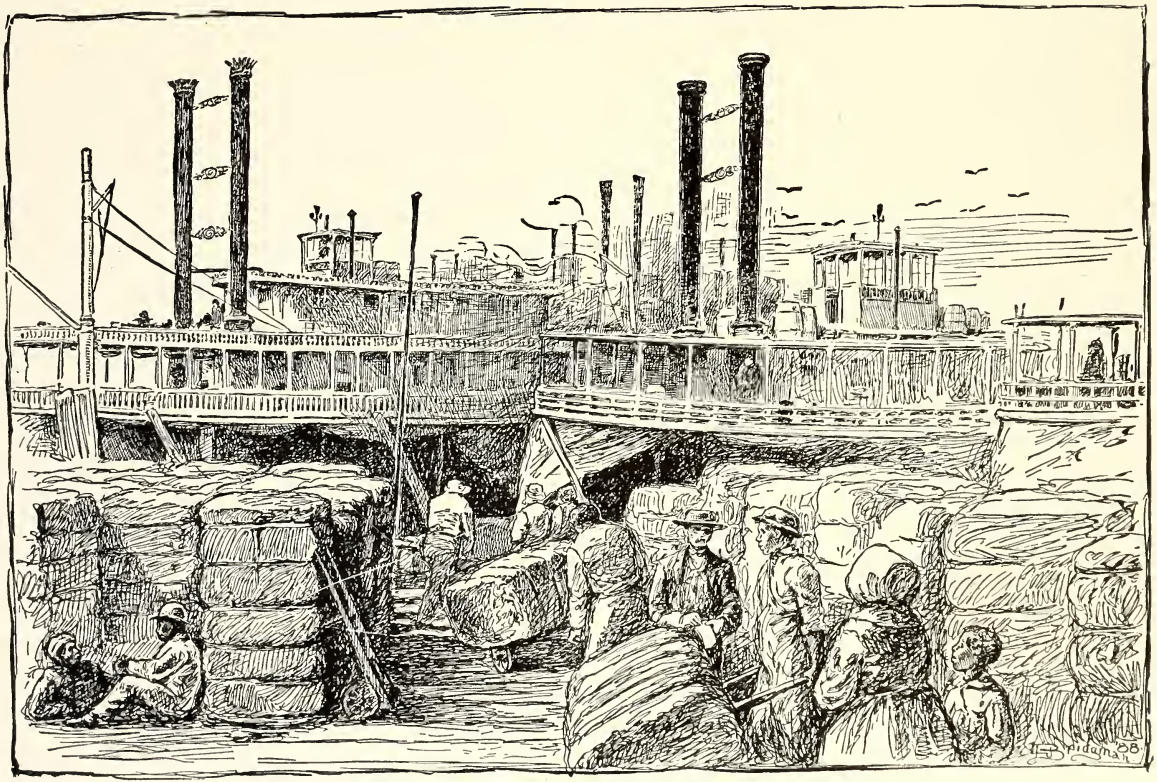
Once again he visited New Orleans, returning home, as before, by steamboat. That voyage is remarkable, because it first opened young Lincoln's eyes to the enormity of African slavery. Of course, he had seen slaves before; but the



FLOATING DOWN TO NEW ORLEANS.

sight of a slave sale in the old market place of New Orleans seems to have aroused his anger and given him an intense hatred of slave-holding. He, himself, declared, years after, that it was that visit to New Orleans, that had set him so strongly against slavery.

There is a story told by one of his companions that Lincoln looked for awhile upon the dreadful scenes of the slave market and then, turning away, said excitedly, "Come away, boys! If ever I get a chance, some day, to hit that thing"



ON THE LEVEE AT NEW ORLEANS.

— and he flung his long arm toward the dreadful auction block — "I'll hit it hard!"

Now this may have been, as some folks say it is, a "made-up story;" but we know, from Lincoln's own words, that his intense hatred of slavery dated from that New Orleans trip. If he did speak those words, he spoke as a prophet; for he did get the chance; he did "hit" slavery; he hit it so "hard" that it fell, never to rise again; and, to-day, north and south, east and west, all true Americans thank God for Abraham Lincoln and the death grapple he gave to human slavery.

But that, you see, was just the way with this brawny rail-splitter, this backwoods boy, this man of the people. When he set out to do a thing, he did it. It was this very determination, this powerful "grip" with which he took hold of things, this impatience with what seemed to him wrong, or brutal or unfair, that helped Abraham Lincoln to master things, and made him the righter of wrongs, the savior of the union. He always did hate unfairness in boys, in men, in manners and in action.

Soon after he returned from his flat-boat trip to New Orleans he had an opportunity to show that he could not and would not stand what is termed "foul play."

The same Mr. Offutt who had hired Lincoln to be one of his flat-boat "boys," gave him another opportunity for work.

Offutt was what is called in the West a "hustler;" he had lots of "great ideas" and plans for making money; and,

among his numerous enterprises, was one to open a country store and mill at New Salem — the very same village on the Sangamon where, by his "patent invention," Lincoln had lifted the flat-boat off the snags.

Mr. Offutt had taken a great fancy to Lincoln, and offered him a place as clerk in the New Salem store.

IN OFFUTT'S STORE — "HE'LL BE PRESIDENT SOME DAY, HE WILL!"

The young fellow jumped at the chance. It seemed to him quite an improvement on being a farm-hand, a flat-boatman, or a rail-splitter. It was, indeed, a step upward; for it gave him better opportunities for self-instruction and more chances for getting ahead.

I suspect that Offutt was what you boys call "a great blower." He liked to hear himself talk, and he liked to talk "big." One of his favorite themes was Abraham Lincoln. That young fellow's length of arm and limb, his strength, his handiness, his learning and his oratorical powers were all made the most of by his friend and employer the "hustling Hoosier," who boasted loudly and constantly that "my clerk, Abe Lincoln" "could beat the universe."

"Why," he declared, "that boy of mine knows more 'n any man in these U–nited States. He'll be president, some day, he will. Yes, ma'am, you mark my words: that boy'll be president of the U–nited States, some day."

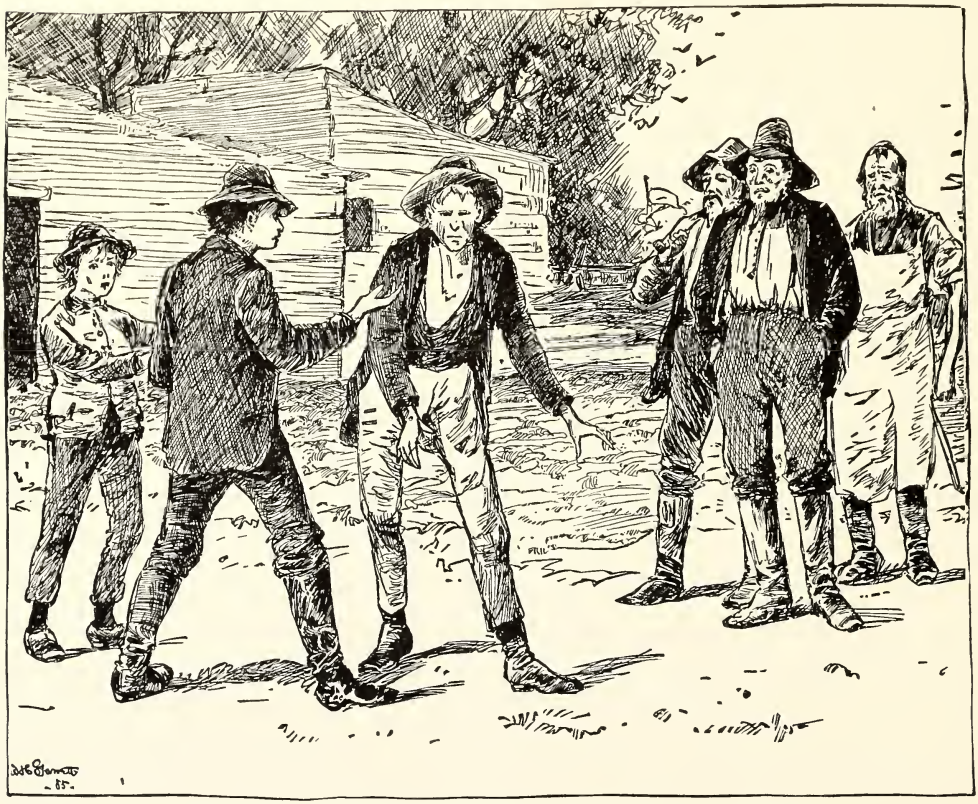
Offutt's store was a favorite "loafing place" for the New Salem boys and young men. Among these, were some of the roughest fellows in the settlement. They were known as the "Clary Grove Boys" and they were always ready for a fight, in which they would, sometimes, prove themselves to be bullies and tormentors.

When, therefore, Offutt began to brag about his new clerk the "Clary Grove Boys" made fun of him; whereupon the store keeper cried: "What's that? You can throw him? Well, I reckon not; Abe Lincoln can out-run, out-walk, out-rassle, knock out and throw down any man in Sangamon county."

This was too much for the Clary Grove Boys. They took up Offutt's challenge, and, against "Abe," set up, as their champion and "best man," one Jack Armstrong.

All this was done without Lincoln's knowledge. He had no desire to get into a row with anyone — least of all with the bullies who made up the "Clary Grove Boys."

"I won't do it," he said, when Offutt told him of the pro-



"THE 'CLARY GROVE BOYS' WERE ALWAYS READY FOR A FIGHT."

posed wrestling match. "I never tussle and scuffle, and I will not. I don't like this woolling and pulling."

"Don't let them call you a coward, Abe," said Offutt.

Of course, you know what the end would be to such an affair. Nobody likes to be called a coward — especially

when he knows he isn't one. So, at last, Lincoln consented to "rassle" with Jack Armstrong.

They met, with all the boys as spectators. They wrestled, and tugged and clenched, but without result. Both young fellows were equally matched in strength.

"It's no use, Jack," Lincoln at last declared. "Let's quit. You can't throw me and I can't throw you. That's enough."

With that, all Jack's backers began to cry "coward!" and urged on the champion to another tussle.

Jack Armstrong was now determined to win, by fair means or foul. He tried the latter, and, contrary to all the rules of wrestling began to kick and trip, while his supporters stood ready to help, if need be, by breaking in with a regular free fight.

This "foul play" roused the lion in Lincoln. He hated unfairness, and, at once, resented it. He suddenly put forth his Samson-like strength, grabbed the champion of the Clary Grove Boys by the throat, and, lifting him from the ground, held him at arm's length and shook, him as a dog shakes a rat

Then he flung him to the ground, and, facing the amazed and yelling crowd, he cried:

"You cowards! You know I don't want to fight; but if you try any such games, I'll tackle the whole lot of you. I've won the fight."

He had. From that day, no man in all that region

dared to "tackle" young Lincoln, or to taunt him with cowardice. And Jack Armstrong was his devoted friend and admirer.

I have told you more, perhaps, of the famous fight than I ought — not because it was a fight, but because it gives you a glimpse of Abraham Lincoln's character. He disliked rows; he was too kind-hearted and good-natured to wish to quarrel with any one; but he hated unfairness and was enraged at anything like persecution or bullying. If you will look up Shakspere's play of "Hamlet" you will see that Lincoln was ready to act upon the advice that old Polonius gave to his son Laertes:

"Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee."

That was Abraham Lincoln's way. And, in the supreme moments of his life, he lived up to that advice, and conquered — whether in "downing" the bullies of the Clary Grove Boys, or in defending the nation from those who sought its life.

He became quite a man in that little community. As a clerk he was obliging and strictly honest. He was the judge and the settler of all disputes, and none thought of combating his decisions. He was the village peace-maker. He hated profanity, drunkenness and unkindness to women. He was feared and respected by all, and even the Clary Grove Boys declared, at last, that he was "the cleverest feller that ever broke into the settlement."

All the time, too, he was trying to improve himself. He liked to sit around and talk and tell stories, just the same as ever; but he saw this was not the way to get on in the world. He worked, whenever he had the chance, outside of his store duties; and once, when trade was dull and hands were short in the clearing, he "turned to" and split enough logs into rails to make a pen for a thousand hogs.

When he was not at work he devoted himself to his books. He could "read, write and cipher" — this was more education than most men about him possessed; but he hoped, some day, to go before the public; to do this, he knew he must speak and write correctly. He talked to the village schoolmaster, who advised him to study English grammar.

"Well, if I had a grammar," said Lincoln, "I'd begin now. Have you got one?"

The schoolmaster had no grammar; but he told "Abe" of a man, six miles off, who owned one.

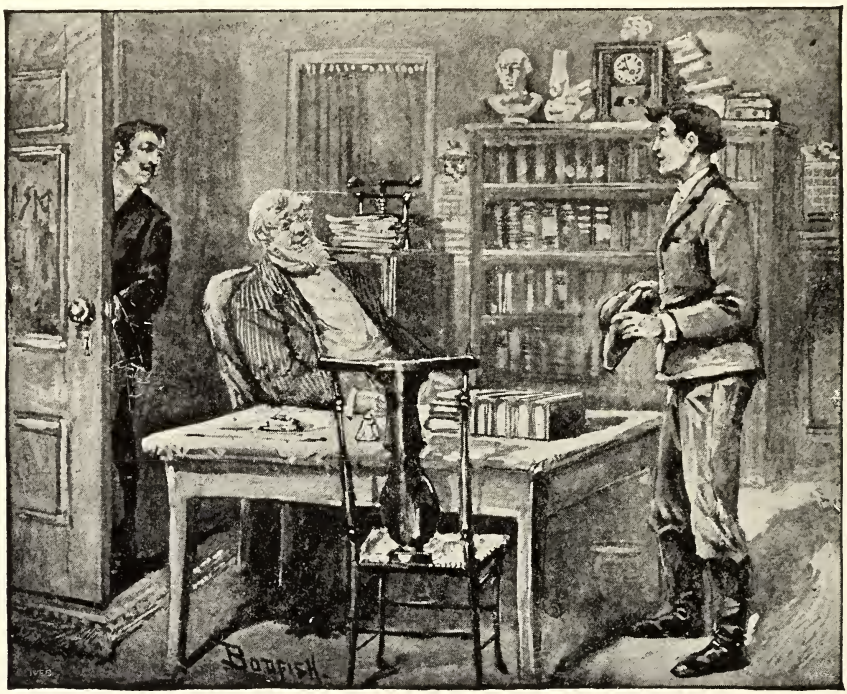
Thereupon, Lincoln started upon the run to borrow that grammar. He brought it back so quickly that the schoolmaster was astonished.

Then he set to work to learn the "rules and exceptions." He studied that grammar, stretched full length on the store-counter, or under a tree outside the store, or at night before a blazing fire of shavings in the cooper's shop. And soon, he had mastered it.

He borrowed every book in New Salem; he made the schoolmaster give him lessons in the store; he button-holed

every stranger that came into the place "who looked as though he knew anything;" until, at last, every one in New Salem was ready to echo Offutt's boast that "Abe Lincoln" knew more than any man "in these U–nited States."

One day, in the bottom of an old barrel of trash, he made a splendid "find." It was two old law books.



"HE BORROWED EVERY BOOK IN NEW SALEM."

He read and re-read them, got all the "juice" and sense and argument out of their dry pages, blossomed into a debater, began to dream of being a lawyer, and became so skilled in seeing through and settling knotty questions that, once again, New Salem wondered at this clerk of Offutt's, who

was as long of head as of arms and legs, and declared that "Abe Lincoln could out-argue any ten men in the settlement."

You see now, do you not, what pluck and perseverance will do? You know how Abraham Lincoln started in the world; how he came from the poorest and most unpromising beginnings; how poverty and ignorance and unfavorable surroundings and awkwardness and lack of good looks could not keep him down, because he was determined to raise himself and become somebody.

In all the history of America there has been no man who started lower and climbed higher than Abraham Lincoln, the backwoods boy. He never "slipped back." He always kept going ahead. He broadened his mind, enlarged his outlook, and led his companions rather than let them lead him. He was jolly company, good-natured, kind-hearted, fond of jokes and stories and a good time generally; but he was the champion of the weak, the friend of the friendless, as true a knight and as full of chivalry as any of the heroes in armor of whom you read in "Ivanhoe" or "The Talisman."

He never cheated, never lied, never took an unfair advantage of anyone; but he was ambitious, strong-willed, a bold fighter and a tough adversary — a fellow who would "never say die"; and who, therefore, succeeded.

Take well to heart, boys and girls of America, the story of the plucky boy who, upon what, seventy years ago, was the outskirts of civilization, was all unconsciously training himself to be *the* American.

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN LINCOLN.

"HONEST ABE." That was what the people in and about New Salem called the tall, awkward-looking, good-natured and always-reliable young clerk at Offutt's store. It is a good nickname; for it is one that is generally given in earnest, and not in fun. In this case, too, it fitted.

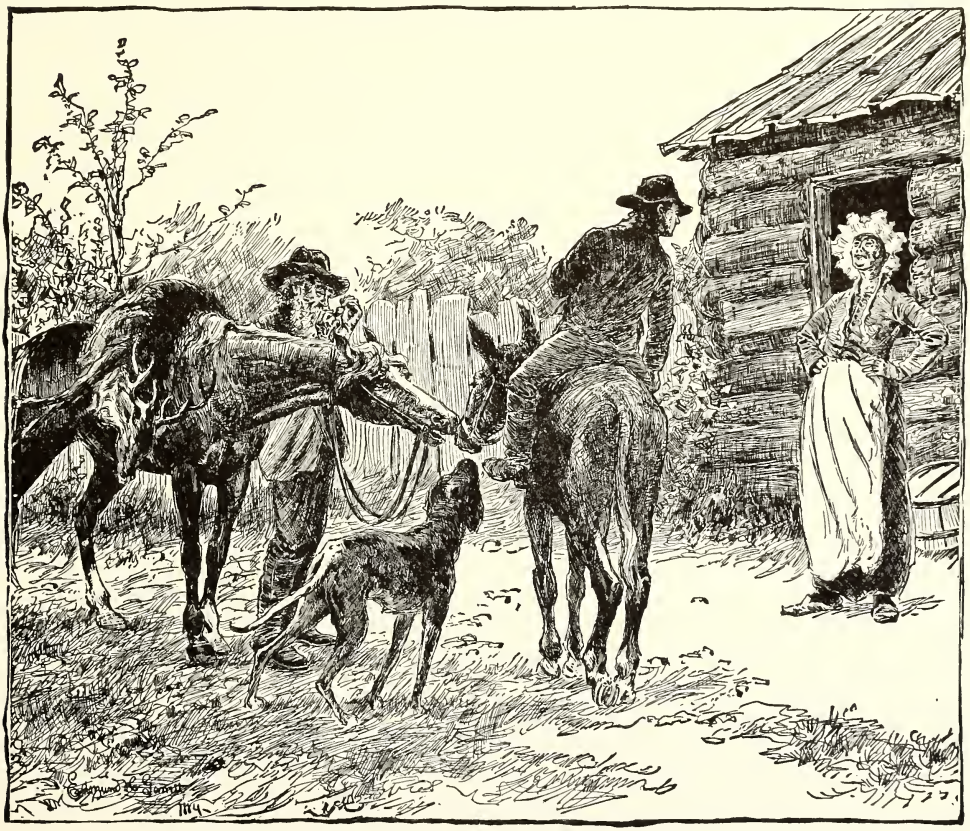
"Abe Lincoln," said the women who traded at the store, "is as honest as the day is long;" and then one of them would tell how, one evening, she went to Offutt's to buy a pound of tea. Abe weighed it out for her and she carried it home.

"And what do you think," she told her neighbor, "before I'd much more 'n got home, 'long came Abe with a little package. 'See here,' says he; 'somethin's the matter with our scales. They weighed short to-night, and I've brought you enough tea to make up your pound.'"

"You don't say so," rejoined her neighbor, "Well! that's just like 'honest Abe,' ain't it? Why, t'other day I went into Offutt's to buy some things. I paid for 'em; and what do you think? Next morning, bright and early, who should show up but Abe Lincoln. 'I figured up that bill of goods you bought last night,' says he, 'and I find I charged

you six and a quarter cents too much. Here is the money. It jest plagued me all night,' says he. I tell you that boy'll get along."

"They was tellin' me up to New Salem," said the first



"NEXT MORNING, WHO SHOULD SHOW UP BUT ABE LINCOLN?"

speaker, "that one day, last week, one of them Clary Grove Boys was struttin' 'round in Offutt's, and he begun to curse and swear while there was some wimmin around. Abe, he told him to quit; but the feller kept it up just the

same; then Abe, he jumps over the counter, ketches the feller by the nap of the neck and lugs him out of the store. They had a little tussle; but you know what Abe's arm is. He threw that feller in a minute. 'I'll teach you to swear at wimmin,' says Abe, says he; and he just took some dog fennel — he was awful mad, Abe was — and he rubbed that fennel in the feller's eyes. You know how it smarts. My! but that feller yelled. By that time, Abe got kind o' cooled off; and what do you think — he went and got some water and bathed that good-for-nothin's eyes and face till all the smart was gone. Did ever you see sich a feller?"

"I CAN ROCK AND READ, TOO," ABE WOULD SAY.

Good opinions travel and stick, just as much as bad ones; remember that, boys and girls. They certainly did with Abraham Lincoln, away off in that little frontier town. Every one liked him — from bullies like Jack Armstrong and others who had felt the weight of his arm, to Offutt the blower, Mentor Graham the schoolmaster, Captain Bogue of the steamer *Talisman*, whose vessel "Abe" piloted through the crooked Sangamon, and the hard-working housewife whom he was always ready to help, whenever she was tired out or her baby's cradle needed rocking.

"I can rock it just as well as not, if you'll lend me a book to read," Abe would say. "I can rock and read too, and it'll sort of spell you."

His reading, and his law book, and his newspaper, and his talking with people gave him a desire to take part in public affairs. Offutt's business enterprises failed all of a sudden; the good-natured "blower" disappeared from New Salem, and Abraham Lincoln was out of a steady job. He did whatever came to hand that would bring him in a little money, and then, urged by his friends, he suddenly decided that he would go into politics.

He struck high. "I'm going to try for the legislature," he declared.

The legislature, in America, you know, is a body of men elected by the people to make laws for the state in which they live and are elected. Lincoln's friends applauded his ambitious resolve and on the tenth of March, 1832, as the custom was, he printed a circular in which he announced himself as a candidate for representative to the Illinois State Legislature.

But he did not go that time. For, before election time came around, all the western country was in a ferment. The Indians were on the war-path, and the governor called for volunteers to fight them.

Many of the young men of the state sprang to arms, and, foremost among them, was Abraham Lincoln. He had never had much to do with the Indians. They had not come near

where he lived, very often, but he had been brought up among Indian fighters, and had learned the lesson which too many Americans have so readily accepted, that "the only good Indian was a dead Indian." He recalled the stories told of the fierce fights in Kentucky in the early days, of many a terrible race for life, and how his own grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, had been shot down at his own doorstep by hostile Indians, while his father, lazy Thomas, then a little fellow of six, stood by his side So, with the rest of the young men of his section he was full of indignation against these "scalp-in' creeters" and was quick to volunteer to drive back the great chief Black Hawk and his band.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiah, the chief of the Sacs, popu-

BLACK HAWK, THE CHIEF OF THE SACS.

larly known as "Black Hawk," was one of the last of the Indian patriots. At fifteen, he was the leading brave of his tribe; at twenty-one, he made himself chief of the Sacs, and, within five years, he had conquered or made vassals of all of the neighboring tribes. He burned with a relentless hatred against the white men of the border, who were fast driving

the Indians away from their homes and hunting grounds. In the end he was defeated, and we rarely give glory to the conquered. But none the less was Black Hawk, the chief of the Sacs, a patriot and a hero.

This is the way we read his story to-day; but, sixty years ago, on the western frontier where men's homes and families were in danger from the aroused Indians, it was read in quite another fashion.

The volunteers who marched against the "red-skins" were pledged to fight for a short time only. People thought the war would soon be ended and the young men left their farm work for what many of them looked upon as a "thirty-day picnic."

As is the way with volunteer soldiers, they elected their own officers. When the men of Sangamon County met to choose their officers, there were two men nominated for captain of the company; and, when the vote was declared, the choice was found to be, by a large majority, for Abraham Lincoln. He was surprised; but he was greatly pleased, too. Any man or boy likes to know that he is popular with his companions or his neighbors.

So, off to the war marched the Sangamon company of volunteers under the command of Captain Abraham Lincoln. The state troop gathered at Beardstown, and there Captain Lincoln's company was made part of the regiment commanded by Colonel Thompson. The general in command of the volunteer troops was General Whiteside.

If, now, you are expecting a story of great deeds — forced marches, dashing Indian fights, bloody battles, heroic actions and all the adventures, exploits and rush of furious conflict, you will not find it here.

Captain Lincoln's regiment never had an encounter with the Indians. They were an unruly lot of soldiers, poorly drilled and without discipline. One night they broke into the company stores and every man "got drunk." For this act of insubordination Captain Lincoln had to suffer. For, though he knew nothing of the affair until the mischief was done, he was held responsible and compelled to wear a wooden sword for two days.

A REFUGEE FROM THE MASSACRE.

He had a hard time of it with "his boys," and, after the inglorious defeat of a portion of the army, in what is known as "Stillman's Massacre," the camp was in a sorry condition, short of provisions, discontented and mutinous.

Lincoln was patient and determined and, in time, would have brought his men into some sort of discipline. The period of their enlistment, however, was soon over and they clamored to be discharged and sent home.

But, if his men displayed no bravery, their captain on one occasion, certainly did.

It seems that a poor, forlorn, helpless and hungry old Indian wandered into camp. He claimed to be a friend of the white men and begged for their help and protection. The soldiers however, had come to fight Indians; so they surrounded the poor old fellow and proposed to kill one "red-skin," anyhow.

The Indian showed a letter of recommendation from General Cass, but the men said it was a forgery and made a rush at the old man.

Captain Lincoln heard the noise and dashed out just in time to protect the victim of the soldier's brutality. He placed himself beside the Indian and shouted: "Men, this must not be done! He must not be shot and killed by us!"

"He's a spy; a spy!" shouted the soldiers.

The Indian crouched at Lincoln's feet, and the tall captain, bade the angry men fall back and let the Indian go.

"O, Lincoln! you're a coward" shouted one of the armed mob.

Captain Lincoln knew the men he had to deal with. "Who says I'm a coward?" he demanded, rolling up his sleeves.

The "boys" knew what that meant. They had no desire to come within range of those long and brawny arms.

"That's not fair, Lincoln!" cried one, "you're larger and heavier than we are."

By military rules, the captain could have ordered his mutineers under arrest. But he knew, that to do so, would be counted by his men as taking an advantage and, therefore, cowardly and tyrannical. So he offered, as was the rule in all backwoods settlements, to fight it out with them, one after the other.

"MEN, THIS MUST NOT BE DONE!" HE SAID.

The men knew the uselessness of a wrestle with Abraham Lincoln. None of them dared try it; so the old Indian was left under the captain's protection and no harm was done him.

It was a small matter; but it proved Lincoln's courage, if any proof were needed. It calls for real bravery, you know, to champion an unpopular cause; but this, as Lincoln's whole life-story shows, was his way when injustice or wrong sought to prevail.

One day, an officer of the regular army, with that contempt for the militia which all professional soldiers always

display, attempted to take advantage of the volunteer troops, and ordered Captain Lincoln to carry out his command.

Lincoln knew that obedience to superiors in command was a soldier's first duty. He did as directed; but he went immediately to the regular officer who had issued the command and said, "You forget, sir, that we are not under the regulations of the War Department at Washington. We are volunteers, subject only to the orders of the State of Illinois. Attend to your own business and there will be no trouble; but any unjust orders by you will be resisted by all of us. We must not be served in any other way than as soldiers and gentlemen."

This spirited stand was respected by the United States officers. They recognized that Captain Lincoln would not let his men be imposed upon, and they did not again attempt to act with injustice to the volunteers.

You may be sure that this brave act made Lincoln all the more popular with his men.

But, when their time of service was up and they demanded to be sent home, Captain Lincoln would not return with them.

"We came here to fight this thing out," he said. "I'm not going home until it is over."

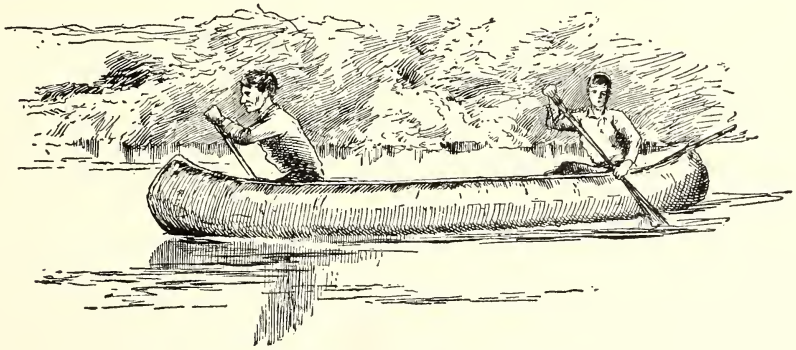
So, when his company was disbanded and sent home, Lincoln at once re-enlisted as a private, and, as Private Abraham Lincoln he served to the end of the war.

"The war" soon came to an end. Black Hawk was

IN THE BLACK HAWK WAR.

defeated. His tribesmen were scattered and he was taken prisoner. The fighting was over and the "Independent Spy Company" in which Private Lincoln served was disbanded at Whitewater, in Wisconsin, and Lincoln started for home.

That very night his horse was stolen by some other home-returning recruit, and he, with his comrade Harrison "just hoofed it," as the soldiers said, most of the way back. Getting an occasional "lift," now and then, they tramped as



LINCOLN COMING HOME FROM THE WAR

far as Peoria, in Illinois. Here they got a canoe and paddled to Pekin where they just escaped shipwreck, made friends with the men on a log-raft and on that floated down the Illinois river as far as Havana. There they sold their canoe and again footed it across country until they reached home.

This was Lincoln's only attempt at "soldiering." It was neither very exciting nor very heroic, and, ever after, he was accustomed to make fun of his experiences, and especially to "take down" those who tried to boast of their "mar-

tial deeds" and tell how brave they were and how much the country owed them for courageous service. Lincoln never did have any interest in or sympathy for what the boys call

FLOATING DOWN THE ILLINOIS.

"a blower." With him, always, actions spoke louder than words.

"Did you know," he once said in a speech, at a time when a certain candidate was attempting to "trade" on his military record, "that I also am a military hero? In the days of the Black Hawk War I fought, bled — and came away. . . . . If ever I am a candidate for the presi-

dency people shall not make fun of me by attempting to make me into a military hero."

But for all his fun, this "war record" of Abraham Lincoln had an effect on his character and his life. It made him familiar with men. It gave him a wider knowledge of the world. Especially did it show him the selfish side of life, and lead him to see that men, after all, are what they make themselves and are not to be called heroes because of their own brag or bluster.

On the other hand, his comrades and associates learned to know him better. They saw how much sincerity, truthfulness and real courage were in this tall and lanky young militia captain; while his willingness to accept a lower position and fill it cheerfully and satisfactorily, showed them his manly qualities and gave them a new lesson in honor, obedience and common-sense. Not many men step down with grace. It is hard to do this. But, sometimes, the step down, is in reality, a step up.

It was Abraham Lincoln's step up in the world. Henceforth, he was to be a leader among his fellow men.

Leadership came slowly, however, and, as is best in the world, for boys and men, for girls and women, the path to success proved long and full of obstacles to be overcome.

But obstacles are sometimes the very things that put us ahead, by making us labor to conquer them and, while doing this, to conquer ourselves. Abraham Lincoln was learning this truth early in life, and he never forgot his lesson.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW THE STORE-KEEPER GREW AMBITIOUS.

EVEN as a boy, Abraham Lincoln had a taste for public speaking and took an interest in politics.

There are many stories told in regard to this. From the day when, in his humble Indiana home, he used to recite long declamations for the boys or say over the minister's sermon, to the days of his first real speechmaking in Illinois, "Abe" was always ready to "take the stump" and make a funny or a political speech, recite a poem or preach a sermon, as his audience desired.

In fact, he used to indulge in this "speechifying" so much, in the hay-field or on the farm, that his employers often objected to such a waste of time, and would pull him from the stump, amid the laughter and applause of the hearers.

He was a leading light at the "speaking meetings" in the Gentryville schoolhouse where he was ready to discuss, at short notice, such topics as: "Which is the busier, the bee or the ant?" "Which is the more useful, water or fire?" "Which is the stronger, wind or water?" "Which has the most right to complain, the Indian or the negro?"

Once, when he was a gawky Indiana farm-hand, he faced

in debate, out in the cornfield, a famous orator and politician of those parts, and almost overcame him in the wordy wrestle. At another time, when a popular politician came around "electioneering," John Hanks told the man that his "Cousin Abe" could beat him talking, "all holler." Whereupon, to prove it, he turned a keg bottom-side up, mounted the boy upon it and told him to "sail in." This, young Abraham proceeded to do, and in a discussion of the subject of the navigation of the Sangamon river, (a question in which every one in that region was interested,) he out-argued his opponent, and, as John Hanks declared, "just beat him to death."

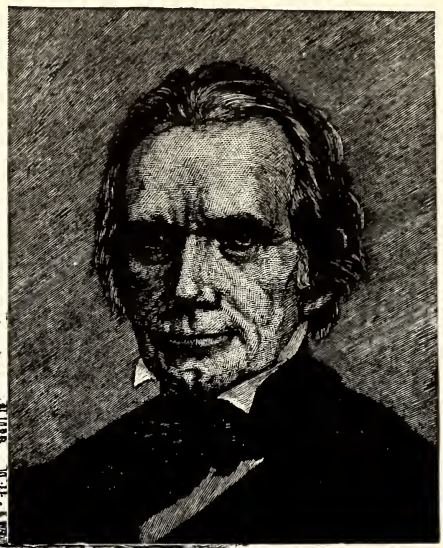
"ON THE NAVIGATION OF THE SANGAMON."

Such experiences as these had taught the young man to "think on his feet," as the saying is; that is, to be quick in thought, ready with words and bold in argument.

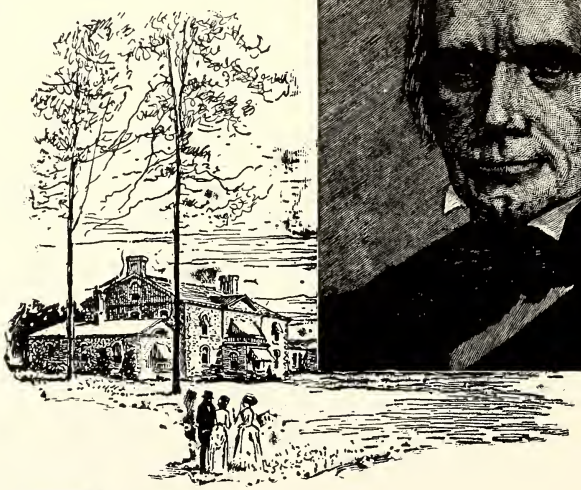
He did not like farm-work; he did not like store-keeping; he was ambitious; he had many friends in his own neighborhood; he was popular; he was "Honest Abe Lincoln;" his strong desire was for public life. So, when he returned home "from the war," he again gave notice, as was

the custom in these days, that he was a candidate for the Legislature.

Some folks laughed at the idea of this raw and uncouth young fellow, who had no money, nothing of what was called "social distinction," and little that could help him on, unless it were brains and determination, thinking he could become one of the lawmakers of the State of Illinois.



HENRY CLAY.



Ashland the home of Henry Clay Near Lexington, Ky.

But Lincoln was bound to try. He went about making speeches, and interesting people in him and in the cause which he represented.

You would suppose that a man who wished to be successful would take the popular side, and belong to the party that was the strongest.

But this was never Abraham Lincoln's way. He was

called "Honest Abe," you know; and, with him, honesty was not only "the best policy," but it meant truthfulness in thoughts and words, as well as in acts.

At that time, the two leading political parties were the Whigs and the Democrats. In the State of Illinois almost every man was a Democrat. But Lincoln could not accept what were called the Democratic principles. He had thought the whole thing out, as he grew to manhood, and he became a Whig — a follower of that great Kentucky statesman and greater American, forever famous as Henry Clay.

So, when he announced himself as a candidate for the state legislature, he declared that he was a Whig — "a Clay man through and through!"

We get a glimpse of him as he made his first political speech. It was at a little place called Pappsville, about eleven miles west of Springfield, now the capital of Illinois. There had been a public auction sale in the place; a lot of people had gathered there, and Lincoln thought it was a good time to have his say; so he stood on the platform to speak.

Those were the days of rough times and rough people. Almost any election season was as full of fights as of speeches. Just as Lincoln was about to begin his speech there were signs of a "free fight" in the crowd, which was composed of men and boys of both political parties. Lincoln saw one of his friends getting badly hustled and bullied.

At once, he leaped down into the crowd and pushed the bullies away from his friend; one of them resisted and began to shove and talk back; whereupon, Lincoln, without a word, seized the fellow and made him "walk Spanish"—you know how that is done—out of the crowd. Then he mounted the platform again and began his speech.

This is what he said:

Gentlemen and Fellow Citizens: "I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same."

This was Abraham Lincoln's first public speech as a candidate for election. When you get further on in this book to what was almost his greatest public speech—the immortal "Gettysburg oration,"—just turn back to this page and compare the two. Both were very short. Abraham Lincoln never wasted words. But see how the years made of the uncouth stump speaker at Pappsville one of the noblest orators in the English language.

He was an odd-looking figure as he stood there, making his first speech. One who was with him thus describes his dress: "He wore a mixed jeans coat, claw-hammer style,

short in the sleeves and bobtail — the tails so short, in fact, that he could not sit on them — flax and tow linen pantaloons and a straw hat. I think he wore a vest, but do not remember. He wore pot-metal boots."

But looks do not make the man. So when, soon after, some of his opponents began to poke fun at the long-armed, long-legged, poorly-dressed candidate for political honors, this is the way he answered them:

Fellow Citizens: I have been told that some of my opponents have said that it was a disgrace to the county of Sangamon to have such a looking man as I am stuck up for the Legislature. Now, I thought this was a free country; that is the reason I address you to-day. Had I known to the contrary I should not have consented to run. But I will say one thing, let the shoe pinch where it may; when I have been a candidate before you some five or six times and have been beaten every time, I will consider it a disgrace, and will be sure never to try it again; but I am bound to beat that man if I am beaten myself. Mark that!"

I have given you both these speeches that you may see that there was no "backing down" in Abraham Lincoln. When he determined upon a thing, he stuck to it to the end. He was making his way, as I have told you, in a rough time and among rough people He knew how to talk to them. They liked courage and will and persistence; and all of these, the young man from New Salem possessed.

So, when election day came around, he had a large vote

and many who were opposed to him politically voted for him because they liked him and knew that he was honest, straightforward and reliable. He was beaten; but he gained the respect, the confidence and the good-will of the community — and he was never again defeated, on what is called the popular vote.

This is the way in which he concluded his printed address to the voters of Sangamon county. It is typical of the man:

"Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow-men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young and unknown to many of you. I was born in the humble walks of life. I have no wealth or popular relatives or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the country; and, if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me, which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate. But, if the good people in their wisdom see fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined."

This was straightforward and manly, was it not? When he was disappointed in this first effort for political honors he was just as manly and straightforward.

He had made a good impression; he had made a good

many friends. But he had not succeeded. Now he must go to work again; and he went to work.

He went into business in a country store. His partner was shiftless and good-for-nothing and the business was a failure. It left Lincoln burdened with debt; but he never tried to shirk this debt, as too many men do. Though it took him many years to accomplish it, he paid off every dollar. He was "honest Abe," you know.

After he failed as a store-keeper, he began to study law again. Sometimes he had to walk as far as Springfield to borrow a law book; but whatever he read, he remembered.

His way of reading was peculiar. Sometimes he would sit cross-legged on top of a woodpile; sometimes, bare-footed, in the shade of a big tree, moving around as the shade moved; sometimes, lying flat on his back, with his feet "up a tree;" sometimes, walking in the woods, and sometimes in the cooper's shop by the light of the flaming wood fire. But always, whatever his place or his posture, with a book in his hand — studying, studying, studying!

There was a good chance in that new country for a man who was a surveyor, so Lincoln determined to become one. He could not go to an Institute of Technology, or a Polytechnic school, but he borrowed a book on surveying, and studied it diligently for six weeks. Then he set up as a surveyor.

The man who helped him in this attempt, who loaned him the book and gave him his first "job" at surveying was

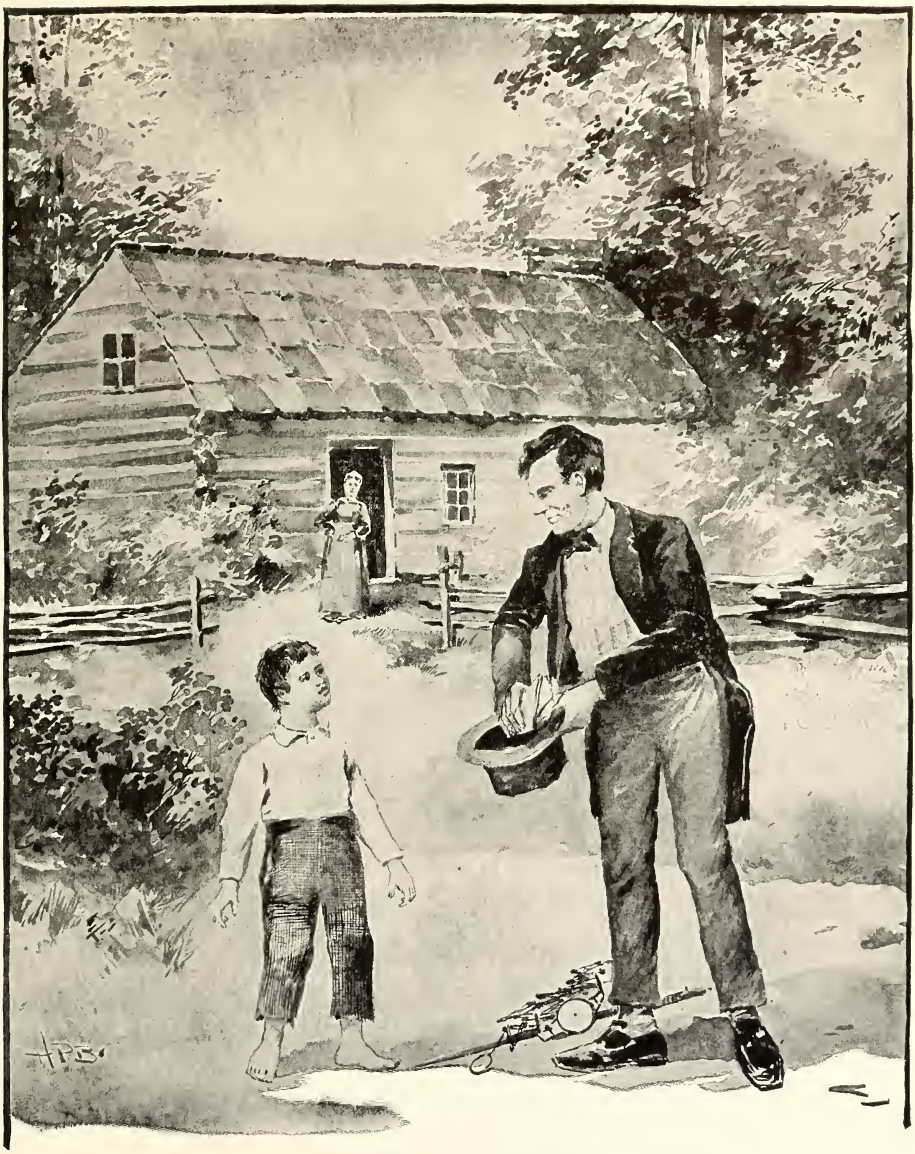
his political opponent; but Lincoln never forgot the friendly act; and though, later on, he had to fight his friend hard, politically, he never said one unkind word or one unpleasant thing about him.

In 1833, Lincoln was appointed postmaster at his home village of New Salem. The duties were not very hard.

"PEOPLE DID NOT RECEIVE MANY LETTERS IN THOSE DAYS."

Indeed, the mail was so small — people did not write or receive many letters in those days — that, it is said, the postmaster of New Salem carried his post-office in his hat. In fact, he would go off on a surveying trip and take the post-office along with him delivering letters by the way.

So, with his surveying and his post-office he managed to



"A. LINCOLN, POSTMASTER."

"He would go on a surveying trip and take the post office along with him."

live for several years his pinched, humble, but helpful and honest life. He was just as good-natured, just as friendly and just as popular as ever — the umpire in all disputes and the peacemaker in many an ugly row.

One day a combative little fellow who did not take kindly to the "referee's" decision, strutted up to him and said, "See here, Abe! I'll lick you."

Lincoln looked down at his small challenger. "All right," he said, "but let's fight fair. See here; you chalk out on me just your size, and I'll count every blow outside that mark as 'foul.'"

This was so funny that the little bully began to laugh; that took all the fight out of him, and what promised to be a row, ended in fun.

At another time, Lincoln came upon a poor fellow whom he knew to be in a bad way, chopping up an old hut which he had been hired to split into firewood. The day was raw, the man was barefooted and thinly clothed; he looked sick and pitiful; he was cold and shivering.

Lincoln stopped and spoke to the poor wood-chopper.

"See here! how much do you get for this job?" he asked.

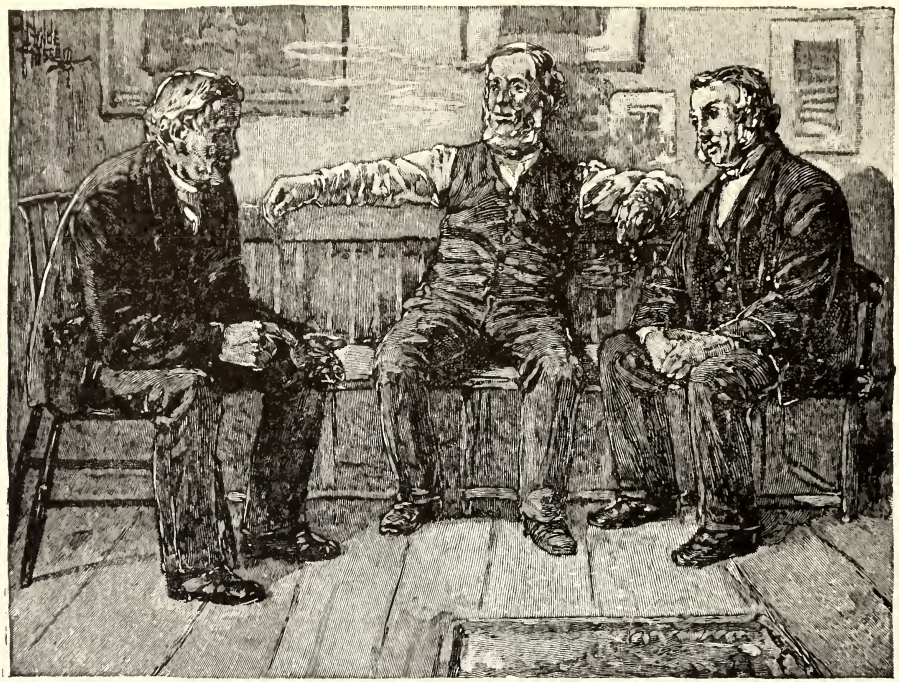
"A dollar," said the man. "I've got to have it to get me some shoes."

Lincoln took the axe from the man. "You go in and warm yourself," he said.

Then he swung the axe as only Abe Lincoln could; he

had that old hut chopped into kindlings so quickly that it was soon finished. Then the poor wood-chopper got his dollar and his shoes, and never forgot the kindness of Abraham Lincoln.

It was just such humane, friendly and kindly acts as these



"HE'S A PERFECT TAKE-IN, I TELL YOU," SAID THE DOUBTER.

that endeared him to his neighbors, and made him respected and popular. So, when, later on, he again decided to try his chances "on the stump," he was successful; for almost every one voted for him, and in 1834 he was elected to the Legislature by a majority larger than that of any other man on the ticket.

But even this success was not all due to his popularity. It was also because of his ability and his merits.

"Who is this man Lincoln?" one citizen asked another, in a town to which Lincoln had come "electioneering."

"He's a candidate for the Legislature," was the reply.

"Well, I must say!" exclaimed the first speaker, with a sneer; "can't the party raise no better material than that?"

"HE LED THE REST OF THE MOWERS ALL THE WAY ROUND THE FIELD."

"Hold on," returned the other citizen; "you just go hear him speak to-morrow, before you pass judgment on him."

The speech was made, and after it was over, the doubter was asked what he had to say now about Lincoln.

"Why, sir!" he cried, "he's a perfect take-in, I tell you. He knows more than all the rest of 'em put together."

It was during this canvass for votes that Lincoln went one day into a harvest field where some thirty men were at

work. The friend who was with him introduced him to the mowers as a candidate for the Legislature.

"No use," said one of the men, looking the young fellow over, "we don't vote for any man who can't make a hand"— that is, who can't cut a good piece of standing grain.

"Well, boys, if that's all," said Lincoln, "I'm sure of your votes."

He took up the "cradle"; he swung it against the grain with those terrible arms of his; he led the rest of the mowers all the way around the field. That satisfied them; they were all Lincoln men after that.

So, you see, by his personal bearing, by his popular ways and his real ability, he reached his ambition at last. The poor boy, the farm-hand, the store-keeper entered public life. He became one of the law-makers of his State.

Politics sometimes means low measures, underhand ways, doing things one may well be ashamed of — anything to secure success. But good politics means honorable measures, uprightness, truth, noble ambitions, persistence, patriotism and good character. Any boy may aspire to be such a politician — preferring defeat to dishonor, and feeling jubilant over success honestly obtained.

Abraham Lincoln was this last kind of a politician. He worked hard for success; but he never stooped to do a mean, a questionable or an unfriendly act. He raised himself to success from poverty, and, because he was such a man, he won the respect and love of all.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HONORABLE MR. LINCOLN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was twenty-five years old when he was elected to the legislature. It was a real step upward for the backwoods boy; but it had been won by hard work and through many bitter experiences. He was poor; he was unsuccessful; he was unknown, save to those of his own neighborhood.

That very year in which his friends and supporters had sent him to the Illinois legislature, he had seen hard times. The failure of his business as storekeeper at New Salem, of which I have told you, burdened him with worries, for his creditors seized what little possessions he owned in the world, and sold them for debt.

It was a severe loss to the young man. They did not even leave him his horse and his surveying instrument, upon which he depended to carry on his profession as a surveyor, in which he was meeting with such success.

But he did not grumble nor sulk. "It is the law," he said. "If I got into trouble by my own carelessness, I must suffer the consequences."

It was hard, however. But good friends are the bles-

sing of every honest man; and, in this strait, a friend who believed in Lincoln and knew that, if he were helped over this hard place, he would come out all right at last, went to the sale. Although he had but little money himself he, bought Lincoln's horse, bridle, compass, chain and instrument and gave them back to Lincoln.

"Pay me when you can," he said. "You'll do it, I know."

See now, what an excellent capital is a good reputation! To be known as "honest Abe Lincoln," was worth a great deal to this needy young man. His friend never regretted this generous deed. For Lincoln, within a few years, paid back the debt and never forgot the kindness. Lincoln never did forget.

When he was elected to the legislature he had not a dollar. But here, again, his reputation was his capital. He went to a friend and said, "I want to make a decent appearance in the legislature. Lend me some money to buy some clothes, won't you? you know I'll pay you, some day."

Without hesitation, his friend lent him two hundred dollars. It was more than enough. The young representative went to the legislature "in decent trim," and, out of his salary, managed, in time, to pay back the friendly loan.

So "the Honorable Mr. Lincoln" went to the legislature. He did not do much or say much there, at first. He was still studying books and studying men. He knew wherein he was lacking. He felt that he was ignorant in many ways

— indeed, that was one good thing about this remarkable man. He was never ashamed to say "I don't know," as he was, also, never ashamed of the poverty from which he had risen. He was always ready to learn how to do things in the best way, and to gain instruction whenever and wherever he had a chance — whether from men or from books.

So, in the legislature, he spoke but little. He listened and learned. That is always a safe and sure way to "get the hang of things" and make a good beginning.

Out of the two hundred dollars his friend had loaned him, he bought a suit of decent clothes. They were not elegant — not "purple and fine linen"; they were what was known as "blue jeans" — the workman's best dress of that simple and homely western country.

Everybody in the State capital, which was then Vandalia, knew the tall, raw-boned, awkward "member from New Salem." His fellow-legislators liked to talk with him and listen to his stories and hear his shrewd remarks on men and things. They grew to respect him; the people who sent him as their representative were satisfied with him, and, when election day again came round, Lincoln was re-elected, receiving the largest vote ever given in that region.

In this campaign he became even more broad-minded and American.

"I go," so he said in his address to the voters, "for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in sharing its burdens. I go for admitting all white persons to the

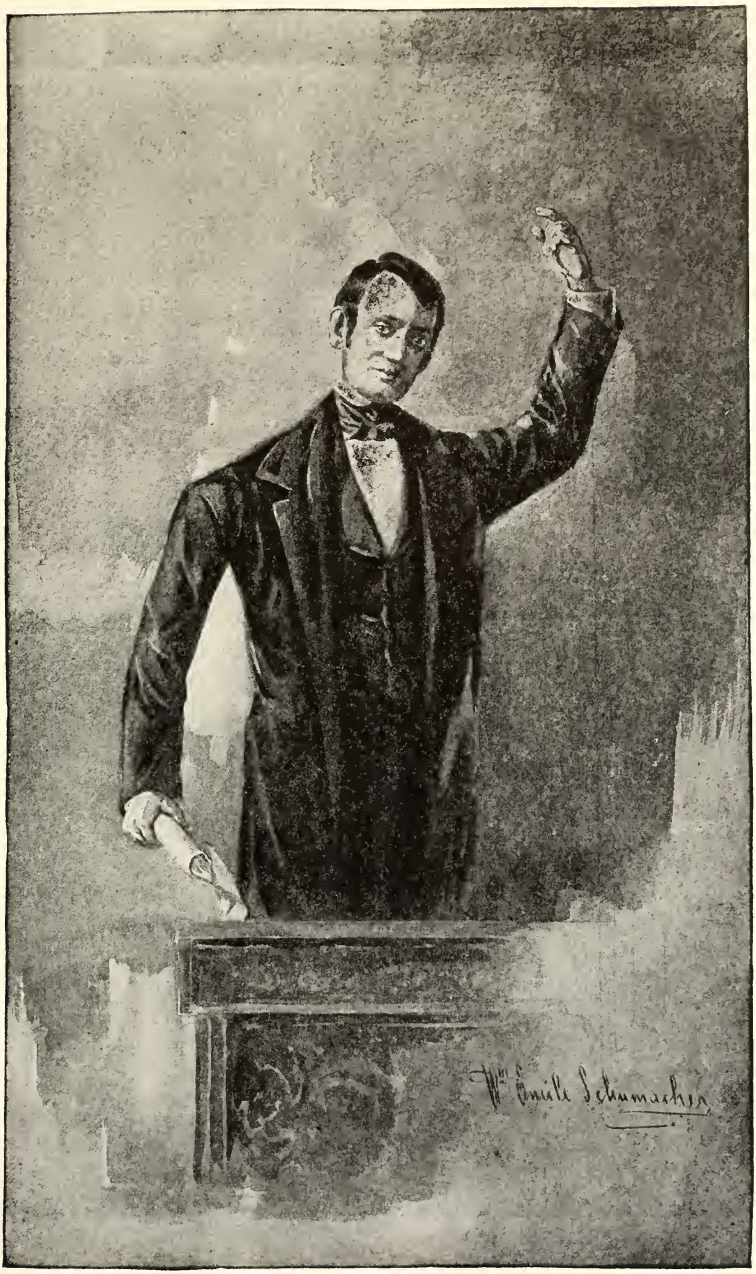
right of suffrage" — that is the right to vote — "all who pay taxes or bear arms — by no means excluding females."

This was quite a stand for a young man to take. For, at that time, men were in doubt as to who should have the right to vote, and most of them were sure women ought not. Many persons declared that if a man were not born in the United States, he should not be allowed to vote. There were long and hot discussions over this question, and it was quite a popular thing for men to cry "America for Americans." But Abraham Lincoln, even in those days, saw that America could only be made great and strong and prosperous by giving to all who were Americans — whether by birth or "adoption," as it is called — the right to say how they should be governed and what the people should do. "Those who bear the burden," he declared, "should have the right to decide about those burdens."

It was quite a brave thing to take the stand he did. But Lincoln never shirked what he believed to be his duty.

His fearless speech and his homely ways made a great impression on the people whom he worked to serve. He was a Whig, and those on the other side tried to turn the people against the Whigs by saying that they were aristocrats, money-barons, ruffled-shirt gentlemen, silk-stocking wearers, trying, by all these nicknames, to turn the poor against the rich.

In one of the political meetings, where rival candidates made "stump speeches" against each other, a certain con-



LINCOLN IN 1840.

"Let it be my proudest plume, not that I was the last to desert, but that I never deserted her."

ceited and flashily-dressed man put a long overcoat over his fine clothes and began to make fun of the Whigs in the usual way, saying that he belonged to the poor man's party, and that Lincoln was the "silk-stocking" candidate. Imagine Lincoln in silk stockings!

The speaker grew quite excited in his remarks and, becoming eloquent, made a fine gesture in emphasis. It was a fatal burst of eloquence. For it tore open his long overcoat and showed the people his fine clothes, his long chain and ornaments and his ruffled shirt-front.

Lincoln saw his opportunity and seized it. He stood out before all the people—a tall, poorly-dressed, awkward-looking man.

"Here you are, my friends!" he cried, placing a hand on his homely suit of "blue jeans"; "here's your aristocrat; one of your silk-stocking gentry, at your service." Then he held out to them his great, toil-worn, sunburned hands: "Here's your rag-baron with lily-white hands," he said. "Yes, I suppose I am what our friend here calls a bloated aristocrat," and he turned with a bow to his rival who was hastily endeavoring to button up his long coat over all the disclosed finery. That "settled" the discomfitted orator!

In fact, it does not pay to make fun of a man's poverty, low birth, or unattractive appearance. People never like to hear honest poverty ridiculed. In America, all men have equal opportunities and small beginnings are no bar to advancement or success.

In this same campaign, it so happened that Lincoln rode into Springfield to speak at a political meeting. One of the speakers on the other side was a leading man of the town who, for the sake of a fine political office, had recently deserted the Whigs for the opposite party. He had also just put on his big house a whole "outfit" of lightning rods — a new thing in those parts.

At the meeting, this man made the mistake of attempting to ridicule and make people laugh at the raw-boned young fellow from New Salem who "wanted to go to the legislature." He poked fun at his appearance, his mean dress, his youth, and called the candidate "an uncouth youngster."

Lincoln "got mad" slowly. He liked fun and was always ready to take a joke. But this he knew was not joking — it was malicious ridicule.

He sprang to his feet with flashing eyes. He swept his long arm toward his detracter.

"I am not so young in years," he said, "as I am in the tricks and trades of a politician. But, live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like that gentleman, change my politics, and with the change receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then feel obliged to erect a lightning rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an angry God."

The people cheered the speaker to the echo. They saw and appreciated the double rebuke — for men never take kindly to one who changes his politics for a reward; and, in

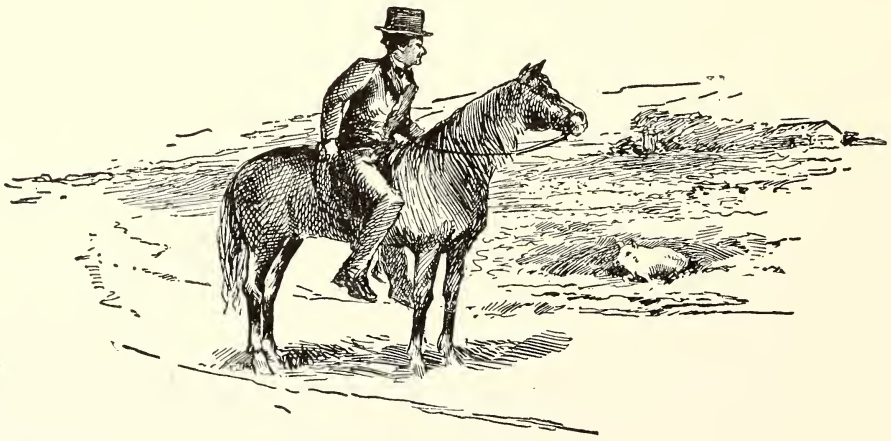
those days and in that western country, those who put up lightning rods were supposed to be afraid of the lightning — which was always spoken of as a "visitation from God."

But, though he could be justly severe with all shams and false statements and meannesses of word or deed, he had the kindly, helpful and beautiful spirit that would assist an enemy in trouble, or go out of the way to help even an animal in distress. You remember how, as a mere boy, he went back to bring a timid dog across an icy stream. We have a later picture of him in a similar act of kindness. It was told by him as a good joke on himself; but it really exhibits the man's kindliness and humanity.

It was when he was a young legislator, and, as most successful young men are apt to do, thought pretty well of himself. He was riding over the prairie to make a visit and, as he says of himself, was "rather fixed up" — which means, I suppose, that he had on his best clothes. As he rode along he saw a poor pig "mired down" — that is, stuck in the mud. He felt badly for the poor beast, but being "fixed up" he knew it would hardly be safe to meddle with a muddy pig. So he resolved to ride by without even looking at the distressed animal. But he couldn't help it. The feeling of pity for anything in trouble was too strong, and he looked back. As he did so, poor piggy shot at him an imploring glance from its little eyes as much as to say, so Lincoln declared, "What! you going to leave me here? Then my last hope is gone."

The appealing look was too much for the young man. He turned back, got down from the horse and pulled the imprisoned pig from its peril. Then he rode on, muddy, but much relieved.

It was this sympathy with whatever was in trouble, distress or bondage — an outgrowth, probably, of his own hard and sad boyhood — that, as he grew into manhood, led him to put himself on the side of the weak and unfortunate. This



LINCOLN AND THE "MIRED" PIG.

tenderness, this love of justice and hatred of wrong, displayed itself in his action during his second term as a member of the Illinois legislature.

He had grown to have more confidence in himself and he spoke and acted more frequently than during his first session. The nine members of the legislature from his county all happened to be very tall men. Each one of them was at least six feet in height; some of them were over; but Lin-

coln was the tallest; and his height in inches, added to his popularity and ability, led to his being called "the Sangamon chief," while he and his eight tall associates were nicknamed "the Long Nine."

There was but one of the Long Nine, however, beside Lincoln who felt as he did about one question that was already stirring the hearts of men in the northern states — the subject of slavery.

For two hundred years, negro slavery had existed on the American continent. Gradually, however, it had been given up in the north and, in Lincoln's day it was confined almost entirely to the southern states, while the question as to whether it was right, just or American was already beginning to be deeply considered by all thinking men who loved their country and longed to see her prosper.

Those who objected most strongly to negro slavery and wished to see it stopped altogether, were called "Abolitionists," because they wished to do away with, or "abolish" slavery. They were good, honest and noble men, but they were not always wise, cautious or what is called "politic." They said many hard things about slavery and the people who owned negro slaves, and, by their fiery words and headstrong actions, made much trouble and many enemies for themselves. But people of this stamp — who are what are called "reformers," because they wish to "reform," or make over the world according to their own ideas — always set the people to thinking; and thinking usually ends in action.

For many years, however, the abolitionists were unpopular all through the United States. Even though many men and women believed that slavery was wrong, they thought there were other ways to correct the evil than those desired by the abolitionists. So there was often serious trouble in the north and, especially, in the states that bordered upon the actual slave states of the Union. Illinois was near enough to these border states to be affected.

Still, as I have told you, all this talk and trouble set men to thinking, and among these was Abraham Lincoln. What he had read and what he had seen led him to believe that slavery was wrong. You remember how his experience in New Orleans made him disgusted with slavery as he saw it; when he became a man and a law-maker in the Illinois legislature he gave even more thought to the subject.

Many of the northern states felt that the Abolitionists did more harm than good; they felt that it was not right to interfere with the "prosperity" of their southern neighbors, and that such actions as helping runaway slaves to escape, or seeing them through to Canada by such secret aid as was called the "underground railroad," were alike illegal and criminal. For this reason they took measures to "head off" the abolitionists, and punish all those who attempted to interfere with what were thought to be the "rights" of the slave holders of the south.

Among other states, Illinois passed such repressive measures — they were what is known in our history as "black

A STATION ON THE "UNDERGROUND RAILROAD."

(*Helping runaway slaves to Canada.*)

laws," while others were full of what the Bible calls "threatening and slaughter" against those who dared to interfere with slavery.

Abraham Lincoln believed these laws to be unwise, unjust and un-American. He was not afraid to say so. Abraham Lincoln was never afraid. So, in March, 1837, he made a protest to the legislature of which he was a member, in which he put himself on record as hostile to slavery and opposed to the stern and harsh methods that were to be put in operation against the Abolitionists.

He could — as I have told you — get but one man to sign this protest. This man's name was Daniel Stone, and though this "protest" reads to-day, after slavery has been ended forever, as a very mild and cautious utterance, still it was a bold thing to do at that time; for it declared, among other things, that "the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy" — and men had got themselves into terrible trouble for daring to say such a thing. But you know enough of Abraham Lincoln, by this time, to feel certain that he dared do anything he thought to be right or just.

It does not seem to have destroyed Lincoln's popularity with the people of Sangamon county who had sent him to the legislature. They admired his pluck; they knew that he had worked hard in their interest, and, when he came home, they gave him a dinner at which, when they called him up to make a speech they thus introduced him: "Abraham Lin-

coln; he has fulfilled the expectations of his friends and disappointed the hopes of his enemies."

In 1837, the capital of Illinois was removed to the new town of Springfield — now a flourishing and beautiful city.

"The Honorable Mr. Lincoln" went to serve in the legislature to which he was again elected. He begun to make his mark as a speaker to whom men like to listen, as a champion for his political ideas whose words could always be understood and as a man who never "dodged the issue."

In the year 1837 he took part in a long debate in the legislature in which all the leading men spoke. One of Mr. Lincoln's opponents boasted that his side was the stronger and most popular, and made fun of Lincoln's party, declaring they could never succeed, because they were so few in numbers and so weak in their cause.

Lincoln, you know, kindly-hearted though he was, never would stand the charge of fear, nor meekly listen to words of ridicule.

He rose to his feet and, turning his tall form toward the speaker, he cried: "Address that argument to cowards and knaves. With the free and brave it will affect nothing. It may be true; if it is, let it be. Many free countries have lost their liberty and ours may lose hers; but, if she shall, let it be my proudest plume, not that I was the last to desert, but that I never deserted her."

That was almost prophetic, was it not? We, who know how steadfast Lincoln stood in the days that threatened the

liberties of his native land, can see how, even from boyhood, this one idea of love of country filled his mind.

Simple in manners, careful in speech, kind-hearted, affectionate, full of wit and good common sense, the one thing which Abraham Lincoln could never stand with patience was ridicule of patriotism. As he rose, step by step, from poverty to position, the thing that influenced him above all others — above ambition, above individual success, above popularity, above personal advancement, was devotion to country. For this he labored as boy and man; for this he plead with all his fellow Americans; for this he died, when years of toil and sacrifice had worn him out in the service of the land he so dearly loved.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THE COUNTY LAWYER WON FAME.

ONE day, when Abraham Lincoln was a grocery clerk in New Salem the village squire happening to stroll by "Jake Bales's" woodpile, saw a long-legged young fellow "settin' straddle" on top of the woodpile.

"Hello, Abe!" he cried; "what you readin'?"

"I'm studying" was the reply.

"Studyin', eh? What you a-studyin' of?" asked the squire.

"Law," answered the boy on the woodpile.

The idea of that long, lank, gawky country boy perched on a woodpile studying law was too much for the amazed

"LAW," ANSWERED THE BOY ON THE WOODPILE.

squire who thought he knew all the law that any one could know, or needed to know, in New Salem.

He pushed back his hat from his forehead. "Well! Great Jehoshaphat!" he exclaimed. That was all. As he said, afterward, he couldn't do justice to the occasion.

That woodpile, the shade-tree in front of the grocery store, a woodpath in the forest, the kitchen hearth and the light of the cooper's fire were Abraham Lincoln's only law

HOW ABRAHAM LINCOLN STUDIED LAW.

school. But he kept up his reading and studying, went to the court house where the lawyers were arguing, listened and learned whenever he could, and, years after, became one of the leading lawyers of the State of Illinois.

While he was in the legislature, he decided to become a lawyer by profession. So he left New Salem and went to the new capital of the state. This was Springfield; and there, so he believed, was the best place to build up a practice. From that time, April, 1837, until he was elected president, Springfield was his home.

He rode into town that April day, on a borrowed horse and with all that he owned in the world packed in a bag which he had fastened before him on the saddle.

He went to live with an acquaintance named Speed who offered to share his bed with him and to trust him for the board-money until he was settled.

Lincoln accepted the friendly offer, went into the bedroom, put his bag on the floor and said to his friend with a laugh:

"There, Speed, I'm moved!" and thus he became a practising lawyer.

He rode about the country following the courts, picking up cases wherever he could, and, little by little, he got ahead.

He was bright, smart, clear-headed, logical and shrewd, and he made a good country lawyer. But, even when he was most anxious for business, he was still the good-natured, simple-minded, tender-hearted man that he always was whether as rail-splitter, boatman, store-keeper or legislator.

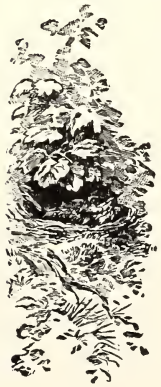
One day, as he was "riding the circuit," as this traveling with the lawyers was called, he saw two little birds that the wind had blown from their nest. Lincoln dropped from his horse, picked up the birds and hunted about until he had found their nest and put them into it.

His companions joked him for such foolishness.

"That's all right, boys," replied Lincoln. "But I tell you I couldn't sleep unless I'd got those birds back to their mother."

It is little things that show a man's character. Such an incident as this — I have told you of some others just like it — is a key to the nature of this great-hearted man; it is one of the secrets of his hold on men and the reason for that broad humanity, which made him the friend of the oppressed, the down-trodden and the unfortunate.

You remember, do you not, how that splendid poem by Coleridge, "The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner," closes?



"Farewell! farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

That was Abraham Lincoln's religion — love to man, love to God, love to country. In that spirit he lived, to

that end he labored, for that he gave up his great, helpful, noble life.

You remember, too, do you not, how he was so thoroughly to be relied upon that the people who knew him got to calling him "honest Abe Lincoln." He was that in business; he was that as a lawyer. People could trust in him; they could believe him. He was an honest lawyer. Men could never get him to do a mean or underhand thing; he would never take a case that he did not believe in himself. No man could purchase his honor, his justice or his voice.

"Go to Lincoln," one lawyer advised a man who asked him to defend a negro slave who had run away; "I don't dare to take your case. It would hurt me in politics. But you go to Lincoln; he's not afraid of an unpopular case."

That was Abraham Lincoln's reputation. He was never afraid to stand up for anything that was right or just or honorable, even if it were unpopular. He was afraid of a lie, he did shrink from a dishonorable action, he had a hatred of injustice and wrong, and no man, no matter how much money he had, could procure the services, in a questionable case, of "honest Abe Lincoln."

It is the business and privilege of a lawyer to settle disputes and decide quarrels. They can do much good in the world. Sometimes, however, there are lawyers who make it their business to stir up trouble and to cause trouble for others, just to make some money for themselves. Abraham Lincoln did not belong to this latter class.

One day, a man came to him and stated a case that some lawyers would have been quick to undertake. Mr. Lincoln listened patiently and then said to the man, looking him squarely in the eye:

"Yes, sir; I can gain that case for you. I can set a whole neighborhood to quarrelling. I can distress a

"HE WOULD NEVER TAKE A CASE HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN, HIMSELF."

widowed mother and her six fatherless children. If I do so, I can get for you the six hundred dollars which, so it seems to me, belong just as much to that mother and her children as they do to you. But you see, some things that are legally right are not morally right. I will not take your case. But I'll tell you what I will do. I'll give you a little advice and won't charge you for it. You look like a sprightly, energetic sort of a man. I'd advise you to try

your hand at making six hundred dollars in some other way."

After he had lived in Springfield several years he formed a law partnership with a Mr. Stuart. That was in 1839. In 1841 he made a new connection with a Mr. Logan, and in 1843 he formed the law firm of Lincoln and Herndon. This last partnership lasted until 1861.

He steadily gained friends and clients — that is, people who brought him business. He began to make money — never very much, for he never charged the big fees that some lawyers do. And, in a few years, he was able to get married.

On the fourth of November, 1840, he married Miss Mary Todd, a Kentucky girl, who had come to live in Springfield. The young couple commenced life at the Globe Tavern in Springfield, where they paid four dollars a week for board and lodging.

Mrs. Lincoln was a bright, attractive and clear-headed young woman, who could save money much better than her husband could. She believed in him, and was sure he would get ahead in the world.

He did, slowly but surely. He bought for himself and wife a little story-and-a-half house in Springfield and begun to save a little money. When he first rode off "on the circuit" with the other lawyers he had to borrow a horse; then he hired one; at last, he was able to buy one; and he was very proud of it, I can tell you. He took care

of it himself, and grew very fond of it, as he did of all animals. I have told you several stories of his kindness to animals. His history is full of such.

Once, when he was sharing a room with a friend on his trips about the state, a cat, that had somehow got into the bedroom asked in cat language to get out, and finally began "mewing and scratching and making a fuss generally." Lincoln got out of bed, caught the cat, stroked its fur, "gently and kindly," till he had quieted it down and put it in good humor; then he opened the door, put the cat out "gently," went back to bed and kept his friend laughing over his funny stories and his memories of the days "when they were boys."

At another time, he was riding with a brother lawyer through a small grove in Illinois where they heard a little pig near by, squealing fearfully. In a flash, Lincoln jumped out of the buggy, picked up a big stick and, rushing to the place from which the squealing came, began to pound something lustily. It was an old sow, whom he had caught eating one of her young ones. Lincoln was very angry.

"You old brute!" he cried, "you shan't eat up your own children!" and so he saved the pig.

As I have already said, it is such things as this that show a man's character; and Lincoln's kindness toward animals was simply one phase of his sympathy for those who were in real distress.

Scarcely a step above animals in those days stood the

negro slaves. Mr. Lincoln's sympathy toward these down-trodden people grew stronger as he grew older and saw more of men and life. You remember how he exclaimed against slavery on that flat-boat trip to New Orleans where he had been present at a slave auction. It was then, as he said, that "the iron entered into his soul." Whenever he saw men in actual slavery he sympathized with them and wished, in some way, to change their condition.

A PICKANINNY.

So, when he became a lawyer, he took charge of quite a number of cases in which a defense was required, either for free negroes who were being persecuted, or for runaway slaves whose masters were trying to get them back into slavery. Lincoln always declared that no man had a right by law or justice to own slaves. He could only hold them, as property, by what is called "brute force." Until Abraham Lincoln became president he never could see just how slavery could be done away with — or "abolished," as it is termed; but he made up his mind, early in his career, that he would oppose slavery actively — and he did.

When he was a traveling lawyer, "on the circuit" in Illinois, it was not a popular thing to befriend the run-away slaves; this I have already told you; but Lincoln could always be depended on to take their side, when

other lawyers refused to do so because of a fear of being unpopular.

"When I go to a lawyer to defend an arrested fugitive slave," one man opposed to slavery declared, "other lawyers will refuse me; but, if Lincoln is at home, he will always take my case."

The son of a negro woman was a waiter on a Mississippi steamboat; he had been a slave, but was now free. At New Orleans, he went ashore, and, as the unjust law permitted the arrest of a free negro on shore if he could show no pass, this black boy was arrested and sold into slavery, because he could not pay the fine.

The boy's mother went to Springfield to find some one to help rescue her boy. No one would take her case. At last, she went to Lincoln. He made application to the governor for help, but the law could give him none. Lincoln was greatly excited. He sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "Nothing can be done? Something shall be done! By the Almighty! I'll have that negro back, or I'll have a twenty years' excitement in Illinois until the governor does have a legal and constitutional right to do something in such a case."

When he found that the law really could do nothing, he "chipped in" with another lawyer, sent money to New Orleans to release the boy and then brought him back to his mother. And, as you know, from his story, he did not rest until that wicked law was removed from the statutes.

Do you remember, when Lincoln first went to New Salem, the trouble he had with the rough gang known as the "Clary Grove Boys," and how, at last, in a fair tussle, he first conquered and then punished Jack Armstrong who would'nt "rassle fair," and thus made a firm friend of the man?

Well, when he was a lawyer at Springfield, the son of Jack, the Clary Grove bully, got into trouble. Jack Armstrong, the boy's father was dead; but Hannah Armstrong, his mother, came to Lincoln in great distress and begged him to save her boy's life, on trial for murder. Lincoln was much moved. In Jack Armstrong's cabin, he had rocked little Bill's cradle, when the boy was a baby; and Hannah had mended his clothes and often given him shelter. So he looked into the boy's case, and feeling certain that the young fellow was innocent, he fought hard for the prisoner's life.

It was a harder tussle than the "rassle" with young Bill's father, years before. And there was, somewhere, unfairness in it, too, just as there had been in that other struggle. The case seemed going against young Bill; the evidence was all strong and unfavorable; but still Lincoln fought on. At last, one witness testified that he saw Bill Armstrong do the deed, and all the more clearly because it was seen in "the light of the moon, which was shining brightly."

Lincoln said nothing until he came to "sum up the evidence," as it is called — that is, go over the testimony of the witnesses and show wherein it is not strong. He

"BILL IS FREE!"

made a strong case in favor of Bill's innocence of the charge; but when he came to the evidence of the man who swore he saw the blow given in the moonlight, Lincoln opened an almanac and showed the jury that, on the night of the murder, there was no moon at all!

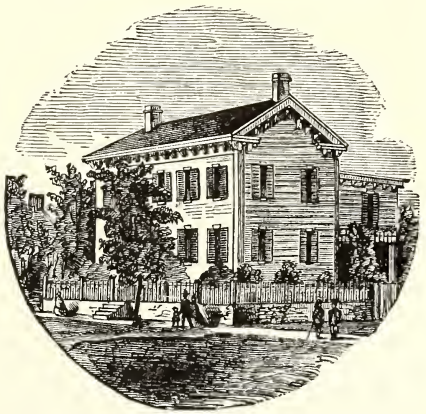
That settled it. The jury gave a verdict of "not guilty"; a messenger sped away to the boy's mother with the joyful news, "Bill is free!"

You may be sure Hannah Armstrong was very grateful to her old friend. As for Lincoln, he would not take a penny for the great work he had done. All he said was "I pray to God, Hannah, that William may be a good boy hereafter; and that this trouble may prove in the end a good lesson to him and to all."

As he won fame as a lawyer, many important cases were

entrusted to him, and, at times, he even sat as judge in the Circuit Court.

He gradually rose in the world; but it was all done, as you can see, by hard work. He fairly won his way. From a borrowed horse, he rose to the proud ownership of one which he fed and groomed and took care of himself. On this horse he rode away "on the circuit," with only a pair of scantily-filled saddle-bags and an old cotton umbrella. After a while he was able to own a buggy; a clumsy-looking one it was, made by a country blacksmith, but Lincoln was very proud of it. As he begun to succeed in life, his wife wished a better house; but he didn't think this was needed. So, once, while he was away on one of his long trips, Mrs. Lincoln hired a carpenter, and put on the little house a second story and a new roof. Then what a surprised man Lincoln was! As he approached the enlarged house, he stopped, puzzled and startled; then, pretending not to recognize it as his house, he called out to a man in the street:



LINCOLN'S HOUSE IN SPRINGFIELD.

"Say, stranger! can you tell me where Lincoln lives? He used to live here."

He was a good neighbor, always ready to do a friendly turn. As I write this chapter, there is still living, in

Waltham in Massachusetts, an old lady who was next door neighbor to the Lincolns in Springfield in Illinois, and she loves to tell people how, many a time, Lincoln would hunt up her cow for her and drive it home to save her the trouble of going off for it.

He was never tired of learning. He was always studying, just as he did when a boy. In these long journeys "on the circuit," which at one time covered the wide region embraced in fourteen counties in the central part of Illinois, he always carried, in his saddle-bags or in his home-made buggy, a number of schoolbooks, from geometry to grammar, which he would read as he rode along. He read Shakspere till he knew the great dramatist almost by heart, and would recite long passages as he journeyed along, either to himself or to his companion.

You see what he was — a conscientious, hard-working, successful country lawyer; a man to be depended upon for good advice, and one who, when he took a case, was wrapped up in it until he fought it through successfully. Whatever money he made — and his fees were never large — he worked for; and so he plodded along, beginning with nothing and rising up, until at last he was able to charge and receive a fee of five thousand dollars for a single case. When that was paid him he felt very rich; for it was more money than he had ever before had at any one time.

People honored him; his associates delighted in him, and it was very dull, on circuit, when Abraham Lincoln was not

"ON THE CIRCUIT,"— AN OLD-TIME COURT HOUSE.

along. He always had a cheery word for everyone, and his stories were famous all over Illinois.

He saw hard times, often; but poverty was sweetened by work, and even misfortune never soured him.

Out of his slender means, he helped his father and step-mother, and other of his poor relations. His father, who remained a rover and shiftless to the end, lived to see his son one of the best-known, most respected and most popular men in the state. Thomas Lincoln died in 1851, at his cabin farmhouse at Goose Nest Prairie; and, before he died, he had learned to honor and look up to this loyal and devoted son, who was slowly but surely "winning his way."

CHAPTER IX.

HOW THE BACKWOODS BOY BECAME PRESIDENT.

WHEN Abraham Lincoln was a boy he heard a great deal about Andrew Jackson.

All the world, indeed, heard a great deal of that famous American! From the day when, as a plucky boy, he had refused to blacken a British officers' boots, to the day when he declared "the Union must and shall be preserved!"

Andrew Jackson had grown steadily into fame, popularity and greatness.

But Jackson was a man of strong character; as self-willed as he was patriotic, and as hot-headed as he was honest.

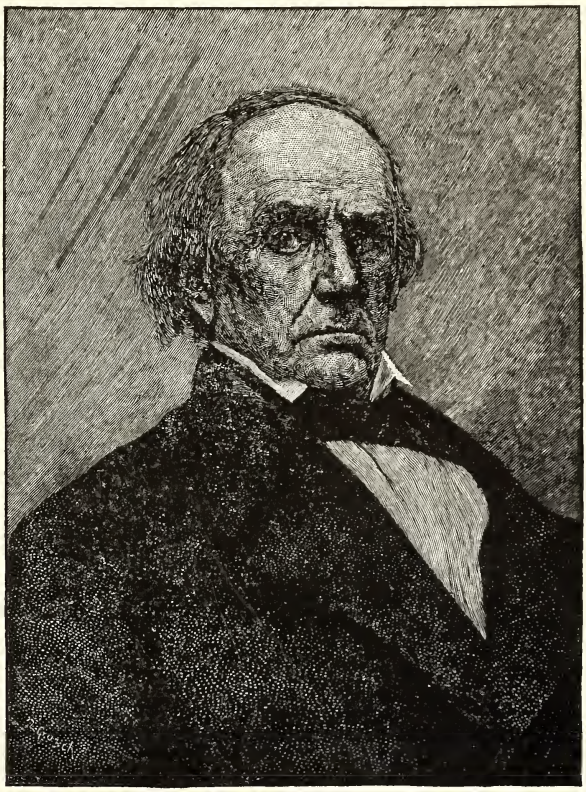
He did many things and advocated many measures that some people opposed as strongly as other people favored; and, when Abraham Lincoln was a young man, the country was divided into the followers and the opponents of Andrew Jackson — into Jackson men and anti-Jackson men.

At first, Abraham Lincoln was an admirer of Jackson. But when, in 1829, that famous man became President of the United States, he set himself firmly against many things that young Abraham Lincoln believed to be for the good of the country.

One of these things was what is called "internal improvements" — that is, making roads, digging canals, building railroads and other matters that were for the public good at the expense of the Government. President Jackson declared that the Government had no right to tax the people for such enterprises; Lincoln, living in a country where "internal improvements" were needed, advocated them strongly. Thus he became an anti-Jackson man, and made his first entry into public life as an anti-Jackson stump speaker.

Out of this position grew other questions. Lincoln became, in politics, what was then called a Whig. The two

greatest Whigs of that day were two very famous Americans, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. Lincoln followed and greatly admired Clay; and, in a region and at a time when Andrew Jackson was a mighty power in the land, this young politician became a fearless, able and devoted follower of Henry Clay. As a Whig, he was elected to the Illinois legislature; he was a candidate for election on the Whig ticket, and, as a Whig, he was, in 1846, elected to the Congress of the United States — the only Whig member of the House of Representatives from Illinois.

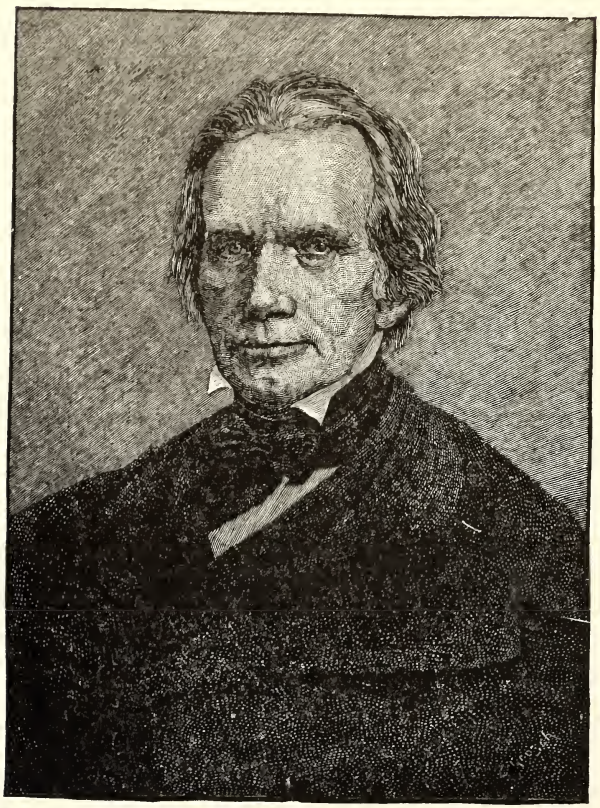


DANIEL WEBSTER OF MASSACHUSETTS.

It was quite an honor for this poor country lawyer. It was one toward which his ambition had been leading him ever since he "went into politics," as the saying is, and you may be sure that the country-folks in his western home who had always been prophesying great things for this awkward but able

young lawyer, said: "See there! Didn't we tell you so?"

They expected wonderful things of him, no doubt. But in a congress, in which such great men as Daniel Webster and John Quincy Adams were members, Abraham Lincoln, unknown except in his own neighborhood and state, had the good sense to "take a back seat" and "go slow." His day for greatness in Washington had not yet arrived.



HENRY CLAY OF KENTUCKY.

He and his wife lived quietly and plainly in Washington during his term in Congress. He did not speak often; but when he did, he said something. He opposed the Mexican War, as did so many other Americans; but he always voted to reward the services of the brave soldiers who fought in that war; and when his term as Congressman was over, he went back to his home in Springfield and again took up his profession as a lawyer.

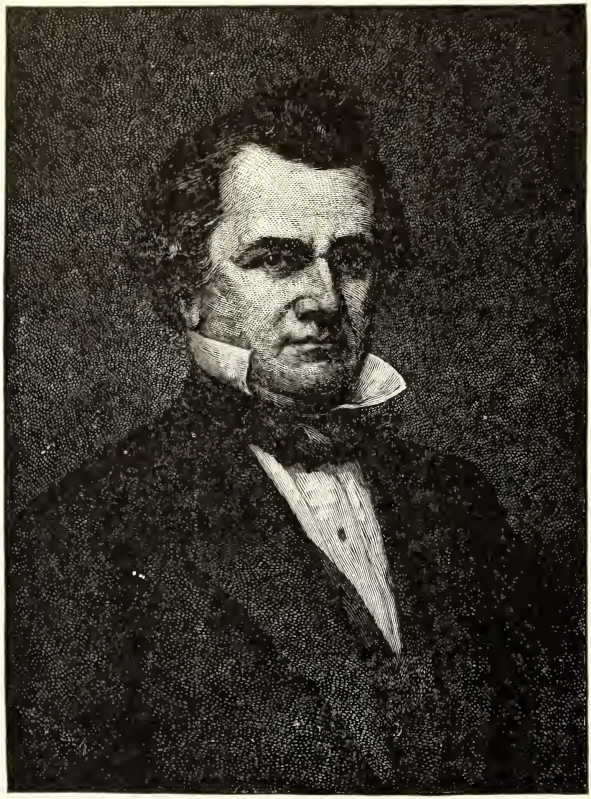
But he was now fairly "in politics." People knew where he stood and what to expect of him; and, when election time came around, Abraham Lincoln was one of the favorite speakers, sure of an audience and certain to command attention and receive applause.

At that time, the leading Democrat in Illinois was Stephen A. Douglas. The Democrats were the political party opposed to the Whigs. Douglas, too, was a fine lawyer, a prominent member of Congress, an eloquent speaker, and a popular man. People called him "the little giant," because, though short in person, he was great in intellect and ability.

As the question of slavery became the important one in the United States, people took different sides. Some said that the Government ought to put a stop to it, or, at least, not allow it to exist in any of the new states that were being made in the west; others said that any person who wished to own slaves ought to be allowed to do so, or that, in the new states, the people of those states should say whether or not slavery was to be permitted there.

At one time an agreement was made that slavery should not be permitted north of the state of Missouri. But when the new states of Kansas and Nebraska were made, this old agreement was cast aside and a bill was passed by the Congress of the United States leaving the question of the "extension of slavery," as it was called, to be settled by the people of those states themselves.

At that, the people in the north were, many of them, very angry; for they declared that this new bill broke through, as it did, the agreement limiting slavery to a certain line. New parties were formed known as pro-slavery men (or those for slavery,) and anti-slavery men (or those against slavery.)



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS.
(*Lincoln's chief political opponent.*)

It was an exciting time. Men who were public speakers spent much time in arguing about the matter in meetings of the people.

Douglas was the man who had introduced the new bill into Congress. Lincoln, at his home in Illinois, was bitterly opposed to it; and, in 1854, these two men met in debate in Illinois and made strong speeches in support of the opposing sides.

Lincoln's first speech was a fine one. People all over the country read it and began to ask who this Illinois lawyer was. But they were to hear yet more of him. For that

debate led to others between the two men, and when, in the year 1858, the new party, which had succeeded the old Whigs and was called the Republican party, nominated, in Illinois Abraham Lincoln as United States Senator, the Democrats renominated Douglas, and the two men were pitted against each other in a great and famous struggle.

That year of 1858, is one to mark in American history with a red letter. It should stand out for all time. For that year made Abraham Lincoln.

If you have followed this story carefully you will be perfectly correct if you say: "I don't see why you should call Abraham Lincoln a great man. He rose from poor beginnings and was called 'Honest Abe Lincoln.' But other men have done quite as much as that. Other men have risen from nothing and become famous. Lincoln was not rich; he was not fine looking; he was not much more than a good-natured, respectable lawyer in a western town, who had been sent to the legislature two or three times and had been to congress. We could pick out lots of Americans who have done that; and you wouldn't call them great."

That is true; and, up to the year 1858, Abraham Lincoln had done no more than hundreds of other honest American citizens. But now, read on.

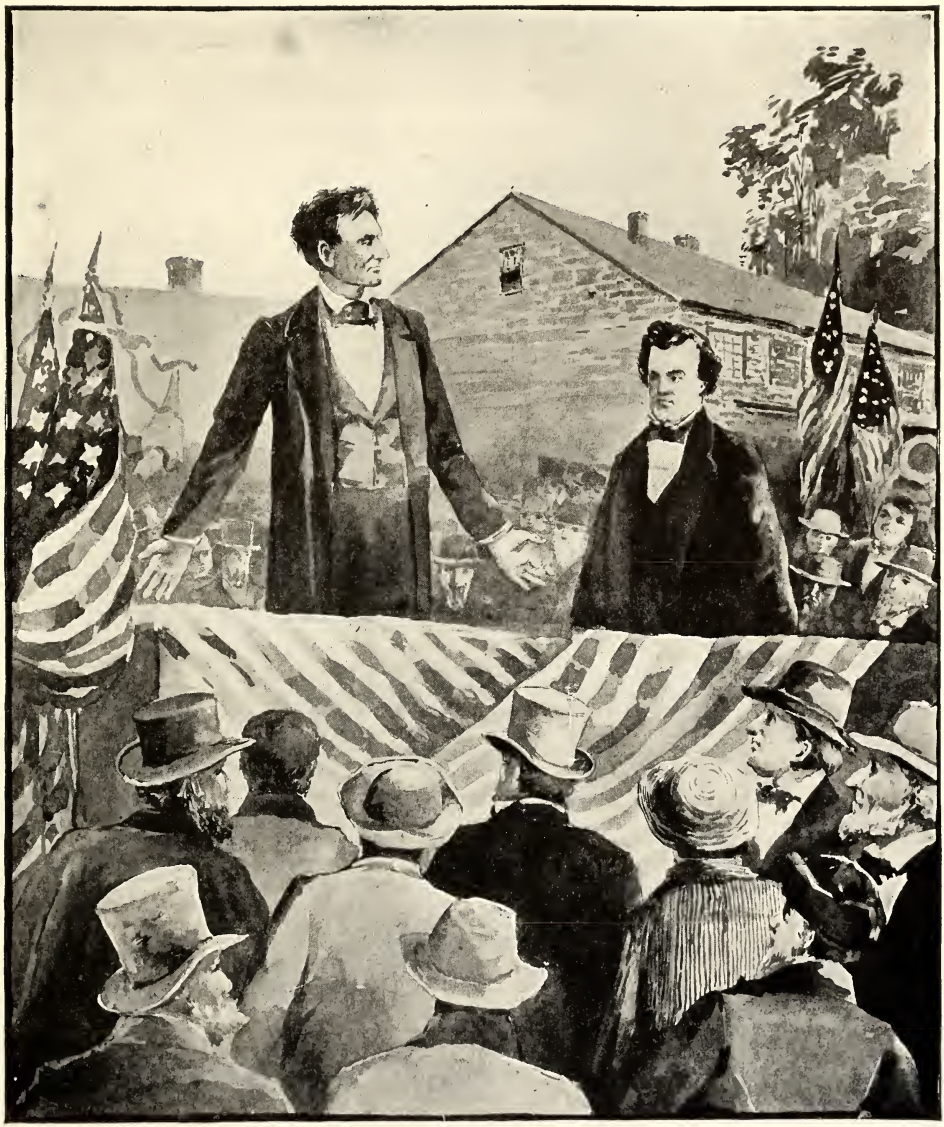
On the seventeenth of June, 1858, the eighty-second anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill — the battle that showed the world that America meant to be free — Abraham Lincoln was nominated to the Senate of the United States.

That very day he accepted the nomination. In doing so, he made a remarkable speech. It is one of the great speeches of the world. In it, he boldly declared that, if America were to be really free, it must cast off the stain of human slavery.

These were his words: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or the advocates will push it foward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states — old as well as new, North as well as South."

That speech roused the land. For years, good men and patriotic men had been trying to do the right thing in regard to slavery in the United States. But they had not said just the right thing nor done just the right thing. Abraham Lincoln had a sudden inspiration, just as the prophets in the Bible were inspired to speak — and he spoke. He put things in just the right light; he spoke the truth. If America were to endure as a free country it must be free!

His friends who wished him to be elected senator were horrified. "You have made a great mistake," they said. "You have ruined all your chances; you have killed yourself politically."



THE LINCOLN–DOUGLAS DEBATE.

("*Up and down the state these two men traveled, speaking to the people, fighting for success, educating the people.*")

"I am so sorry," one of his friends said to him; "so sorry; I wish it were wiped out of existence. Don't you wish it, now?"

Lincoln laid down his pen; lifted his spectacles — he wore spectacles then, when he read or worked; looked at his friend, and said: "If I had to draw a pen across my whole life and erase it from existence, and I had one poor little gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerased." That was a brave thing to say, was it not? His friends were right. It did ruin his chances; it did defeat him in the election for senator.

But it went out to all the world; it set men to thinking as they never had thought before; it sent a death-shot straight to the heart of slavery; it made Abraham Lincoln President of the United States.

Not right away, of course. That speech was but the beginning of the famous struggle of which I have told you — the discussions or debates with his great opponent in the race for the senate — Judge Douglas.

I cannot tell you all about these debates; you can read the speeches for yourselves when you grow older. Up and down the state of Illinois these two men traveled, speaking to the people — in halls, in buildings called "wigwams," in out-of-door assemblies, together or apart, fighting for success on election day, but, more than this, fighting for or against slavery, educating the people of the whole land.

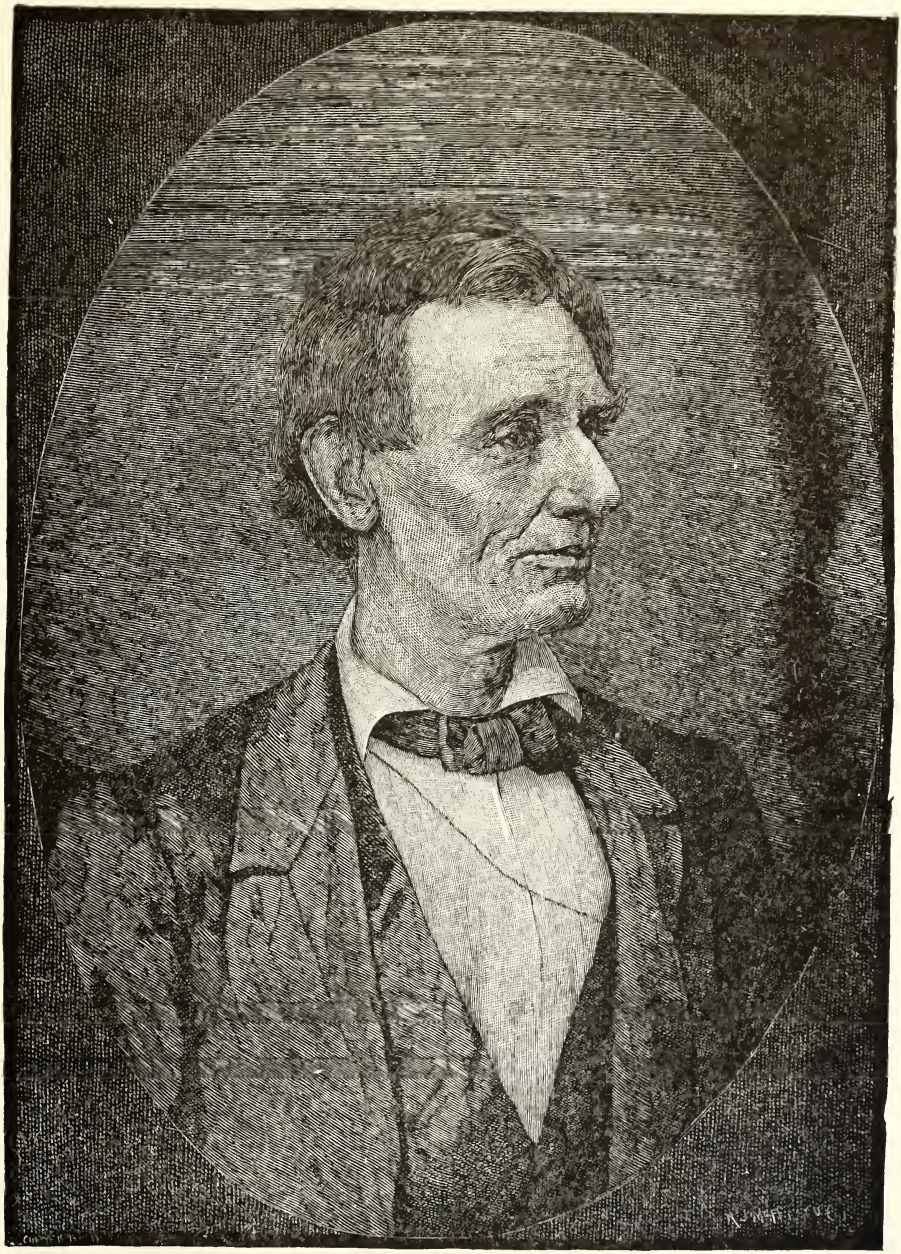
For, you see, those speeches made Lincoln known to the people of the United States. They recognized him as the champion of real liberty. People outside of his own state wished to hear him; and, East and West — in Illinois and Ohio and New York, in Connecticut and New Hampshire, in Rhode Island and Kansas — Abraham Lincoln held great audiences spell-bound, as he pled the cause of liberty and dealt heavy blows at slavery. In one year, he rose, from an unknown country lawyer to an American champion, whose praise was in the mouths of the people.

Of course, thousands could not believe as he did. They were not ready to think as he did; they said he was wrong, and that, to follow his lead, would be to ruin the country and destroy the Union.

But you know enough of Abraham Lincoln's story to feel certain of one thing — he kept at it. He knew that he spoke the truth, and neither threat nor abuse nor ridicule nor fear could move him from his purpose nor make him take back one word he had said in behalf of justice and freedom and right. He was brave; he was sincere; he was true; he was heroic.

He lost the election as senator. His celebrated opponent, Douglas, was elected; and Lincoln went back to his law office in Springfield.

But the people would not let him stay there. They saw that the right man had arisen in the land to lead the forces of liberty; and when the National Republican Convention



ABRAHAM LINCOLN OF ILLINOIS.
(*As he looked when nominated for president.*)

met at Chicago on the sixteenth of May, 1860, to nominate candidates for the presidency, Abraham Lincoln was nominated as President of the United States of America.

It was a great triumph for the backwoods boy, was it not? It was a greater triumph for the American people, though they knew it not. The successful Republicans were overjoyed, of course; but they did not begin to know the real character of the man they had elected. The defeated parties — for there were three other candidates nominated for the presidency besides Lincoln — felt, of course, that his election was a mistake, a misfortune, a calamity. But, to-day, as we read the past, men of all parties unite in the opinion that the election of Abraham Lincoln was the best thing that ever happened to the country; for, even though trouble and sorrow and blood and tears followed after, still it was because of him — even because of all the sad and sorry things that followed his election, that America moved upward and onward. It was a new reading of the old Latin motto; "through night to light." I wonder if you know why?

But to me, one of the things to remember about the election of Lincoln was the man's own bearing in victory. Of course, he was proud to know that he had been made the leader of the forces of freedom; but he knew, as few other men did, what a responsibility and what a burden this great gift of power meant. He was not jubilant; he was thoughtful, silent, almost sad.

He spent the months that remained between his election and his inauguration in settling up his law business and planning out his work. He was terribly bothered by office-seekers — men who, because they belonged to the party that had elected him and had worked for his election as all interested American citizens should work for success, thought he ought to give them positions in his new government. It's poor business, this office-seeking, boys and girls. Some one, we know, must fill this or that office; but it is a great deal better to let the office seek you than to go seeking it, yourself. And it does make a great deal of worry and unnecessary work for the man who has the gift of such office in his power.

At last, the time came for Abraham Lincoln to bid good-bye to his home. What do you suppose was one of the last things he did? He traveled down to the little house in which his good old stepmother was living and bade her an affectionate farewell.

The old lady loved him dearly; she was very proud of him and of his success; but she was terribly afraid something would happen to him. She knew, so she told him, she should never see him again. "They will kill you, Abe," she said; "I know they will," and she clung to him with tears.

"O, no, mother; no, no," her stepson replied; "don't you be afraid; they won't do that. Trust in the Lord, and all will be well. We shall see each other again." And then he bade her good-bye.

On the eleventh of February, 1861, he left Springfield for Washington. A great crowd gathered at the railway station to "see him off." This is the farewell speech he made to the people of his home-town, as he stood on the rear platform of the train while the rain was falling fast, and all men stood silent and with uncovered heads:

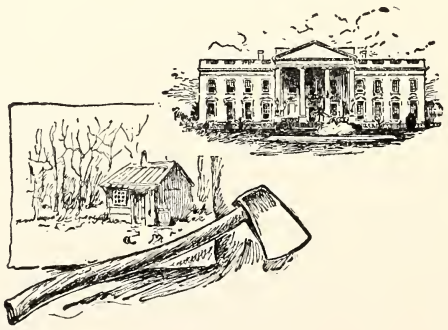
"*Friends:* No one, who has never been placed in a like position, can understand my feelings at this hour, nor the oppressive sadness I feel at this parting For more than a quarter of a century I have lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here, I have lived from my youth until now I am an old man. Here, the most sacred ties of earth were assumed. Here, all my children were born; here, one of them is buried. To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the strange, checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind. To-day, I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me, I shall fail; but if the same omniscient mind and almighty arm

"THEY WILL KILL YOU, ABE," SHE SAID.

that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail — I shall succeed! Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To him, I commend you all. Permit me to ask that, with equal sincerity and faith, you will invoke his wisdom and guidance for me. With these words I must leave you, for how long I know not. Friends, one and all, I must now bid you an affectionate farewell."

Then the train moved slowly from the station, with Abraham Lincoln still standing on the platform, taking his last view of his home. It was his last, indeed.

Soon, Springfield was left behind, and the train rolled eastward. The boy of the log cabin was on his way to the White House.



CHAPTER X.

HOW THE FLAT-BOATMAN GUIDED THE SHIP OF STATE.

WHEN you grow to be men and women, and look back at the years that have gone, you will be surprised to find how well you remember things that happened when you were children.

Certain of the happenings of your young days, you will remember even better than things that occurred later in life.

There are some lines, by a writer whose name I have forgotten, that describe this much better than I can explain to you. Here they are:

"How is it, growing old, that what we've been
In earliest days should cling to memory yet;
When all the interval of life between,
Compared to that, seems easy to forget?

"How life, in which we've fought and fagged and striven,
Looked back upon, should be but empty noise,
While far between it, like the hills of heaven,
Stand out the days when we were girls and boys?

Ask your father and mother if this is not so.

One of those days stands ever out to me — a particularly high-peaked "hill of heaven." I was a schoolboy in New

York city. It was a February day in 1861. I stood on a crowded street corner. A procession was marching down the street. There was a great crowd. Music was playing. Flags were everywhere. As I peeped out between the surrounding shoulders of the throng that lined the sidewalk, I caught a glimpse of an open carriage, in which stood a tall — as I remember him, a very tall man; his clothes hung loosely, almost ungracefully, upon him; he was lifting his hat in acknowledgement of the cheers that greeted him; his hands were large; his arms seemed long and almost ungainly; but his eyes were full of light, and a pleasant smile played over his face, crowned with its high forehead and its thick black hair. Just as I caught a full view of him, he was passing beneath a great flag, stretched across the street; and on the bottom of the flag, as it swayed in the breeze, was flung out this motto in bold letters: "Fear not, Abraham! I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

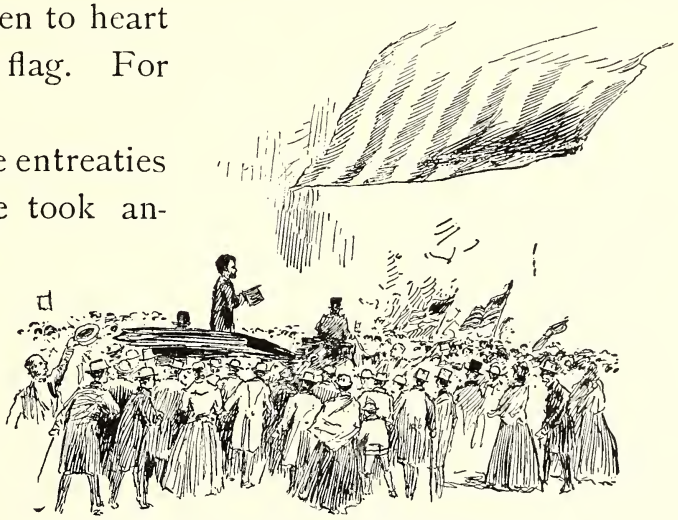
It was my first and only sight of Abraham Lincoln. Do you wonder that I never forgot it?

He was on his way to Washington to be inaugurated as President of the United States. Strange rumors were afloat. It was whispered that it was dangerous for him to try to get to the capital. There had even been threats that he would never get there alive. Men who were bitterly opposed to him said he would never live to be inaugurated.

The country was in great excitement. He was the leader

of a party which was, for the first time, in power, and which was pledged to enforce the laws, even against those who were banded together to set those laws at defiance. He was the champion of liberty and the rights of man against slavery and the selfishness of man.

It has always seemed to me that Abraham Lincoln must have seen and taken to heart that motto on the flag. For he did not fear.



ON THE WAY TO WASHINGTON.

Yielding to the entreaties of his friends, he took another train from Philadelphia than the one originally intended, and thus escaped the deep-laid plot that had been formed to murder him as he passed through Baltimore. True bravery is not to needlessly face danger; it is to face it fearlessly when it comes. It is those lines of Shakspere again, which I have already quoted for you:

"Avoid the entrance to a quarrel."

Lincoln, at that critical time, displayed his courage by keeping out of unnecessary danger.

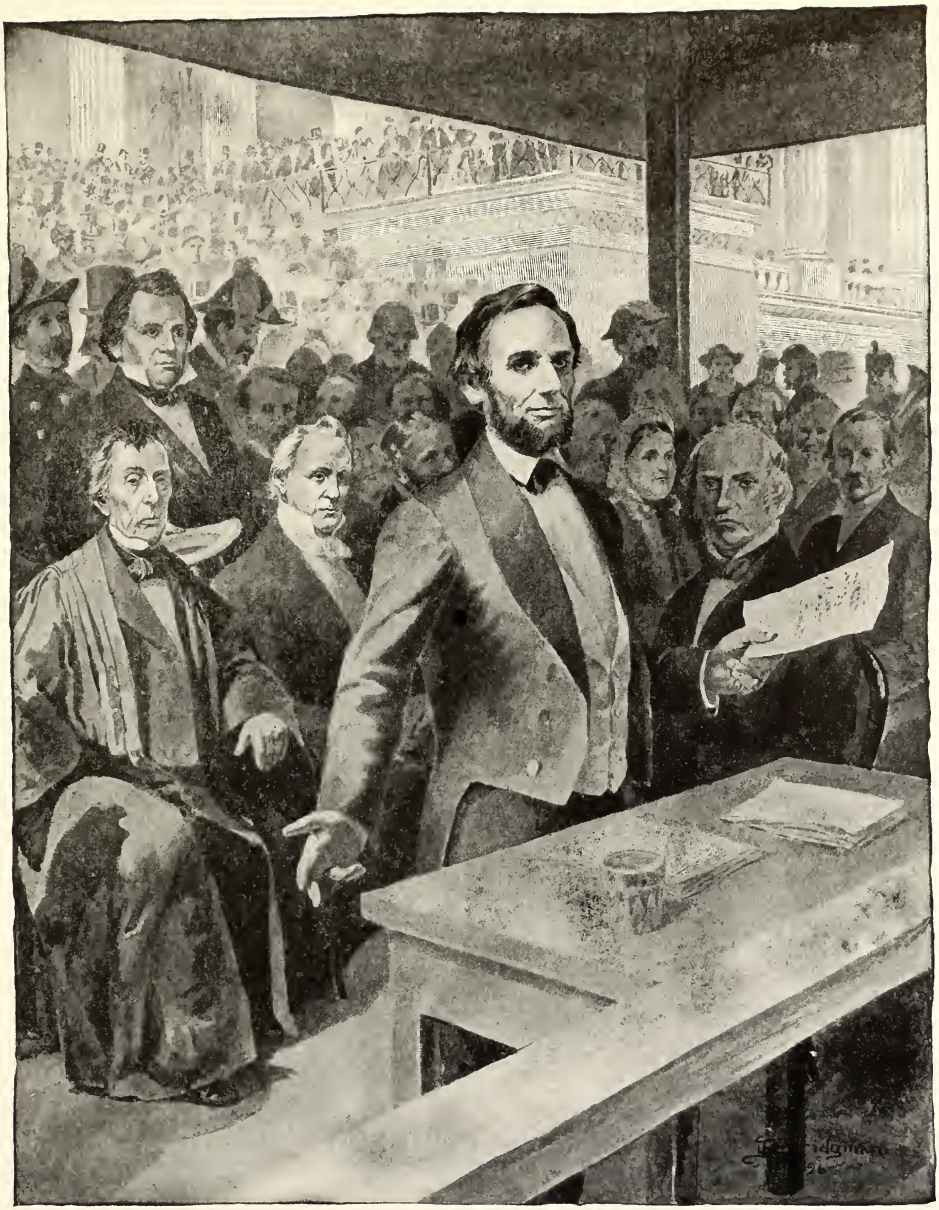
So he came to Washington; and, on the fourth of March, in the year 1861, standing on a platform built for the occasion on the splendid east-front of the then uncompleted capitol, he took the oath of office, administered to him by Chief Justice Taney, and read his inaugural address as President of the United States of America.

And what do you think? In the throng about him, a short, stout, dignified-looking gentleman held the new president's hat while he was delivering his inaugural address. That gentleman was his opponent and greatest rival, the one who had met Lincoln in the great debate that really made the tall westerner president. It was the "little giant" — Senator Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois.

As soon as Douglas found that the liberties of his native land were endangered and that the Union was in peril, he stood manfully by the side of his former rival, and, by his patriotic action, brought to Lincoln's support many who might have been waverers. That is why he stood so near the president on Inauguration Day.

President Lincoln's inaugural address was a grand speech. As you look at Mr. Bridgman's picture of the inauguration, which he has made to show you the historic scene, you can almost imagine that the new president is uttering those noble words of peace and good-will, of entreaty and patriotism, weighted with sadness but bold in their firmness, that will live through the ages:

"I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends.



THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN (MARCH 4, 1861).
"*We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies.*"

We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bands of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Those words of brotherly love and entreaty had no influence on the leaders of the disunion party in the southern states. Even before the inauguration of Lincoln, seven of the southern states had declared that they had a right to withdraw from the Union — "secede," they called it — and had done so. At a convention in Montgomery, in Alabama, the men sent as delegates in the name of their respective states, banded together and announced to the world that a new nation had been formed, under the name of the Confederate States of America. Over this so-called nation, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was elected to preside as president.

Other states joined this confederacy later; and, through the four years of strife that followed, eleven of the southern states were included in the Confederacy.

I shall not attempt to explain the causes of the great rebellion. This is not the story of the War for the Union; it is the story of the man who, through all the trouble that followed, acted for one simple result — to save the Union: Abraham Lincoln the American.

He had a great task before him. But no man in the world was better fitted for that task.

He would not declare war. He worked for peace. He felt that war must come; but he meant that the first act that brought about war should come, not from him, but from those who had arrayed themselves against the Union.

When men demanded that he should "do something" to show "the rebels," as the confederates were called, that they must be careful how they talked and acted, Lincoln said: "I am not here to make war against our fellow Americans. I am here to preserve the laws and maintain the Union. If these men openly make war on the government, then it is time to act. They must strike the first blow."

MAJOR ANDERSON.

They did. They, too, became tired of waiting. They were as impatient as Lincoln was patient. They wished the North to make the first move that would really mean war; but the president would not; and then the southern rebels made their first great mistake. They fired on Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston in South Carolina. Major Robert Anderson, the officer in charge of the fort, surrendered it after a gallant stand. War at last was begun. At once the North, which the southern leaders hoped would be divided, was made one for Union, and aroused to resent the attack upon the government of the Republic.

The North sprang to arms. President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand troops. One hundred thousand answered the call. Washington became a camp, and, for

BOYS OF '61 — ENLISTING FOR THE UNION.

four years, the men of the North and the men of the South fought for the mastery. In that four years, four million men, from the North and South, marched to the field of war.

It was a terrible war. No need to tell you that, however; scarce a boy or girl, living in America to-day, but is familiar with the story, and knows some one, relative or friend, who

was one of the soldier boys of '61 — either on the northern or southern side.

From the very beginning of that dreadful strife, Abraham Lincoln was the leader. This man, untrained to war, who had never held any office of responsibility or direction, inexperienced, unfamiliar, ignorant — so far as affairs of government and of battle were concerned — took his place at the helm of what we call the Ship of State, determined to do one thing — to save it from shipwreck.

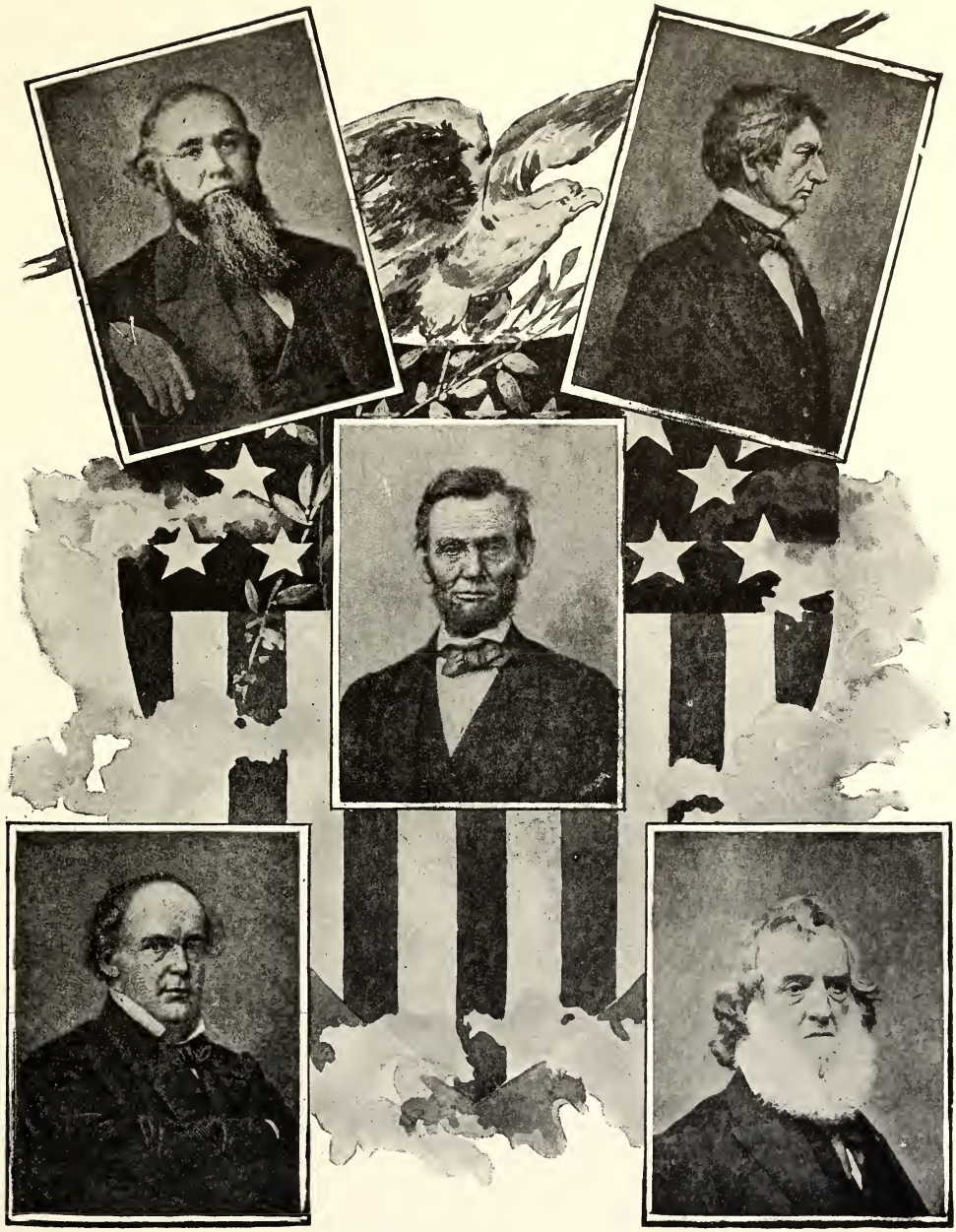
He called able men about him as his advisers. He gave them plenty of work to do, and they did it. These advisers were members of what is called the cabinet, and some of them imagined that, with more experience and a broader knowledge of affairs than had this new president, fresh from a western town, they would direct and "steer" him.

But they soon learned that they had a leader to deal with; not a follower. Once, two senators took upon themselves to advise and caution him in regard to some important measure.

"Beware, Mr. President," one of them said; "do not go too fast; there is danger ahead."

"I know that," Lincoln replied. "I shall go just so fast, and only so fast as I think I'm right and the people are ready for the step."

When some one told him that one of his cabinet officers was supposed to be really the "power behind the throne" — that is, the one who really ruled him — Lincoln replied, "I



PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND HIS CHIEF ADVISERS.

Stanton, Secretary of War.
Chase, Secretary of the Treasury.
The Presiaent.
Seward, Secretary of State.
Welles, Secretary of the Navy.

may not rule myself, but certainly he shall not. The only ruler I have is my conscience — following God in it — and these men will have to learn that yet."

They did learn it, speedily. They found out that Lincoln's brain was as clear and his hand as strong as that of any living man; and they came at last to know how great and clear-sighted he was, to follow where he led, and to carry out his ideas, not theirs.

As he led his associates and helpers, so he led the people. At first, men thought him slow, and were loud in criticism and demands. But Lincoln stood firm. His hand was on the rudder; he was steering the ship on the best and safest course.

He largely won success by his patience. As I have told you, it was because he would not act impatiently and make the first act of war, that the South rushed ahead and crippled its cause by over-hastiness.

So, later, when a brave naval officer, Captain Wilkes, boldly stopped a British ship, the *Trent*, and took from it two men whom the Confederate government were sending as envoys to Europe to plead the cause of the South with England and France, Lincoln, in the face of the anger of the North, decided that Captain Wilkes had no right to take these men from a foreign vessel, and had them set at liberty. That was because he knew that if the government refused to give them up, it would mean another war with England; and he said, like the great statesman that he was, "In 1812 we

fought England for doing just what Captain Wilkes has done. If Great Britain demands the release of these men we must give them up, if we believe in what we fought for in 1812. Besides — one war is enough, now."

He stood almost alone. The North would have him keep the men prisoners, even if it meant war with England. The South wished to see the North drawn into such a war, because that meant England's help; so it, too, hoped the president would not give up its envoys. But this great, far-seeing man declared that, according to law, justice and common sense, there was but one thing to do. He did it. The prisoners were set free and proceeded to England. A war with Great Britain was averted; and, to-day, the world applauds Lincoln's wisdom and patience. The great president never made a mistake.

At another time, one of the Union generals, the brave soldier and "pathfinder," Frémont, declared that all slaves belonging to "rebels in arms," in the region under his command were free. The North was divided in opinion. Many people thought this a great blow at the South. The southerners were very angry; but they were glad, too; because they thought such an act would bring to their side all the men in the North, and especially in what were called the border states, who did not wish to have slavery interfered with.

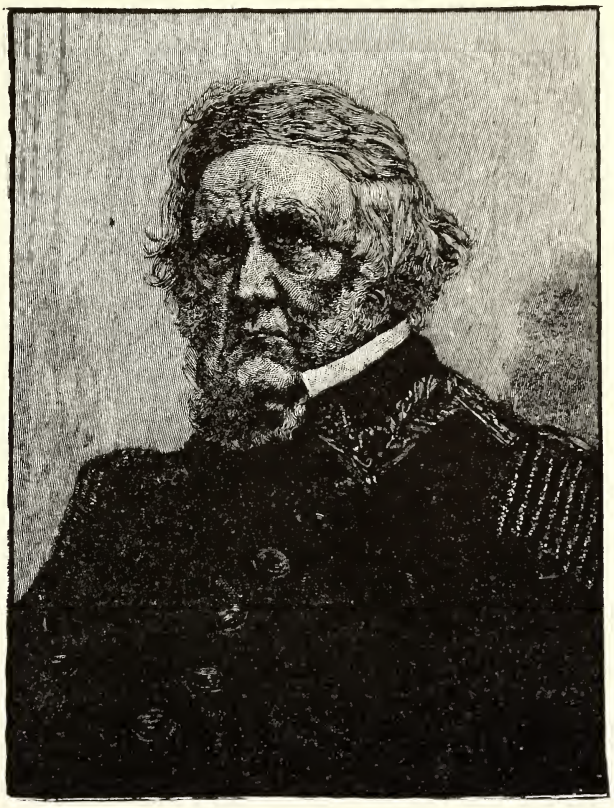
Lincoln knew the American people better than any other man. He knew just how far to go, and just what to do.

CONFEDERATE LEADERS AND GENERALS.

Robert E. Lee. *Jefferson Davis.* *"Stonewall" Jackson.*

A. S. Johnston. *Alexander H. Stephens.*

He quietly over-ruled, as it is called, Frémont's hasty act; and, when another general attempted the same thing, he over-ruled his action, also, and gave public notice that the President of the United States was the one to decide when such a measure was necessary, and not soldiers or generals in the field. This action held the wavering people of the border states loyal; it really weakened the rebel cause far more than the hasty declarations of the two generals could have done.



GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT.

When good old General Scott retired from the command of the army raised for the defence of the Union, and General McClellan was placed in command, Lincoln, while giving the new commander all possible help and support, himself carefully planned what seemed best to be done; and, just as he had, when a boy, made himself master of grammar and geometry and surveying and law, he

now set himself to studying out the science of war and how to fight battles. The president's "plan," as he called it, was made fun of by McClellan and the men who thought they knew better. It was not accepted by the Council of War to whom it was submitted. But time proved McClellan wrong and Lincoln right; and it was the president's "plan," finally, that led the way toward success.

As with the war measures, so with the others; Lincoln's hand was in them all. The way in which the nation dealt with foreign countries, some of them friendly to the southern cause and anxious to see it succeed; the raising of the vast sums of money necessary to carry on the war and meet the expenses of the government; the part that the navy took in the great strife; the conduct of what is called the civil departments of the government, that is, those not dealing with the army or navy — these were all under Lincoln's eye and had his constant and earnest care.

Indeed, military authorities now declare that Abraham Lincoln was a better director than his generals, as students of history assert that he was a better diplomatist than his ministers, and a greater statesman than his councillors.

The burden placed upon him was enough to break down any man. I don't believe there was another man in all the world who could have lived through all the worry and trouble and strain and responsibility of that terrible time when the nation was fighting for life. But Lincoln was not only able to do it all; he did it all. His hand was on the

helm, guiding, directing, and watchful. With a patience greater than any man ever possessed, he stood erect and vigilant until men came to see that he knew what he was about, that he was right, and that, to him alone, the Republic must look for safety, security, guidance, strength and victory. Gradually Congress gave him unlimited powers; no king ever had greater; but he never abused them, as some great leaders of the world have done. The people learned to depend upon him for support in dark times and for wisdom in bright times; and, whenever they grew impatient, or fearful, or despondent, they looked at that tall, sad-faced, quiet, patient, determined, noble figure and felt their faith grow strong again and their fear subside.

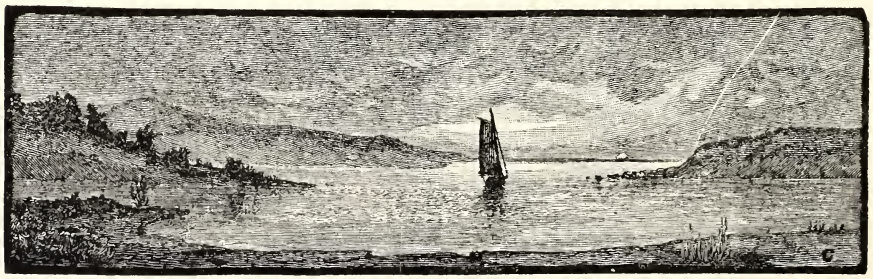
When more soldiers were needed, he called for them and they came; when more money was needed, he asked for it and it came; when things looked dark and all the rest of the world said that the North could never win and that the American Republic would end in failure, Lincoln said: "We shall win!" and the people believed him and called him "Father Abraham" and "Honest Abe."

When you boys and girls have something to do that seems to you hard or almost impossible, you go to your father, with confidence that he can help you or bring the thing about; and your father can generally help you out. It was so with Lincoln. He was the father of the people. They learned to rely upon him, to have faith in him, to believe that he would carry them through. And he did.

Historians now — those who study all the moves and turns of that great Civil War — agree that it ended successfully because Lincoln was at the head of things and that he never made a mistake.

Is it not wonderful, when you think of this man's story, when you know, as you now do, what he sprang from, how little he really knew of government or war, or the great questions and acts that had to be faced and decided, that such a man could so guide, direct and save a great nation from destruction?

Learn from him, boys and girls, patience, kindliness, courtesy, gentleness, firmness, faith, hope, courage, purpose and honor. For, all of these, Abraham Lincoln possessed, as no other man in all the world had them. These were what kept him steadfast to the end and enabled this marvellous man to guide the ship of state through stormy seas to triumph, prosperity and peace.



CHAPTER XI.

HOW ABRAHAM LINCOLN MADE HIS NAME IMMORTAL.

YOU remember, do you not, how Abraham Lincoln hated slavery from the day he saw the slave auction in New Orleans? It was not so much regard for the black man as hatred of the system, that raised his anger. He had high ideas of freedom and what it had done for him. He saw that slavery injured alike the slave and the master, and in one of his great speeches he declared that he would speak for freedom and against slavery, as long as the constitution of the land guaranteed free speech, "until everywhere, in this broad land, the sun shall shine and the rain shall fall and the wind shall blow upon no man that goes forth to unrequited labor.

As I have told you, there were people, long before the war, who favored an immediate stopping or abolition of slavery — hence they were called Abolitionists. They said: "Slavery is wrong! therefore it must be stopped, at once." They did noble and brave work for freedom, with voice and pen; but they were not always wise in the ways by which they would bring about the end they had in view; so, for years, the name of Abolitionist was not popular with the people.

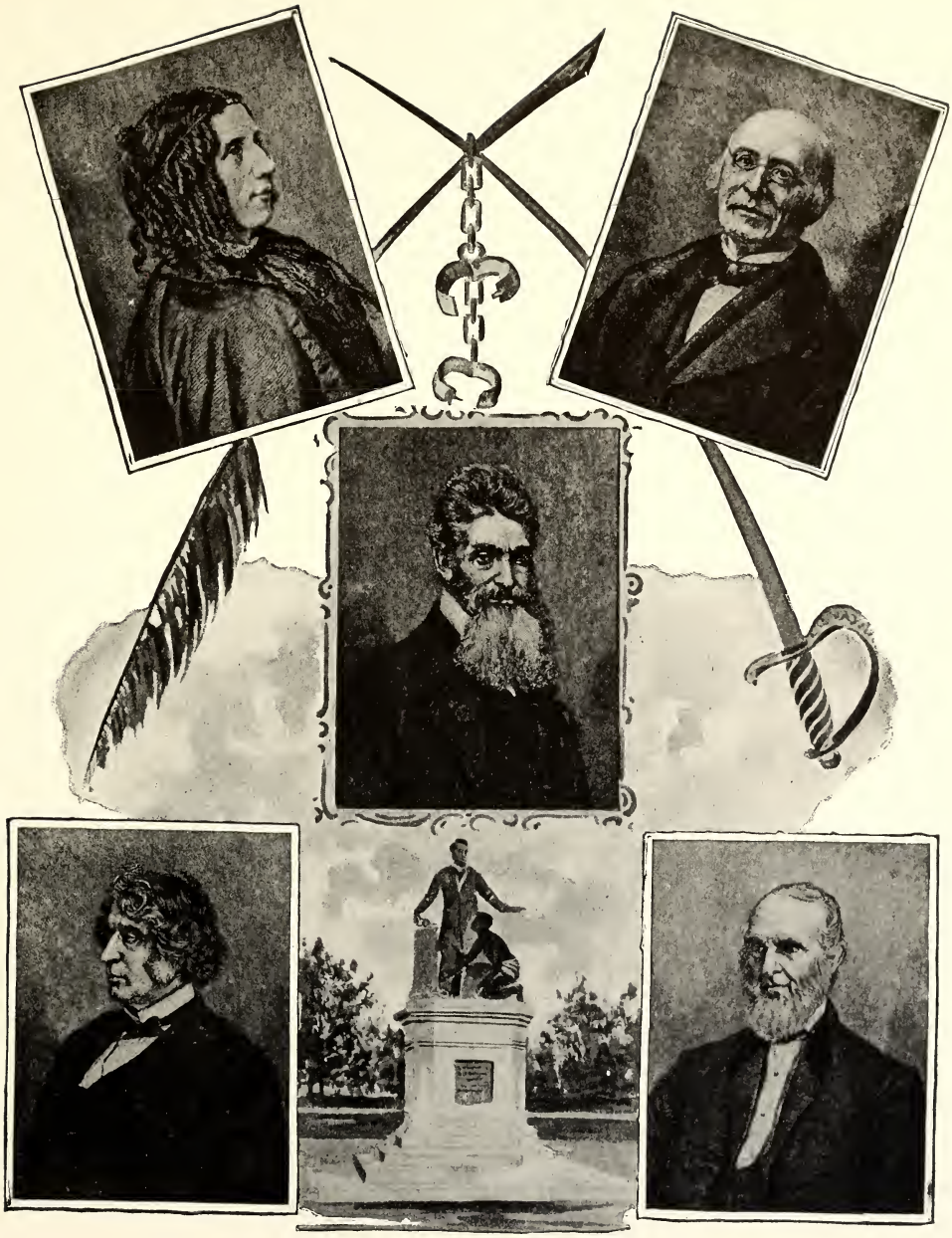
Other men and women, hating slavery just as much, still wished to be just. They said the slaveholders took their slaves or their belief in slavery from those who went before them. It would not be fair to strip them at once of their property—even though that property were in men and women. We must destroy slavery gradually, they said.

Through most of his life Lincoln, was of this belief. He was bound that slavery should not spread any further; he used all his influence to limit it to certain sections, and, finally, to do away with it, altogether.

So he fought against the extension of slavery; he protested against the free states giving in to the demands of the slave states. You remember how he introduced such a measure when he first went to the Illinois legislature. He was always ready to defend the cause of the runaway slave; he tried to lead men and women to see how wrong slavery was and how much better off the republic would be without it.

He favored what is called gradual emancipation. He even advocated the purchase of all slaves by the government and then setting them free; so that those who owned them should not be losers by abolition.

He loved the Union above everything else, and could not bear to think of its being broken or split into two nations. He was a stout defender of the Constitution of the United States, and believed that it should be followed out to the letter. I told you of the first "piece" that he wrote, and which was printed in the newspaper. It was a



NOTED AMERICAN ABOLITIONISTS.

Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Charles Sumner.

John Brown.

William Lloyd Garrison.

John G. Whittier.

boyish, but earnest defence of the constitution. That devotion to the law of his country was the guiding principle of his whole life.

So, when he became president, while he hated slavery, and would like to see it swept out of existence, he knew that the Constitution allowed it to exist, and he could not see his way clear to abolish it. He declared that the war was not being fought to abolish slavery, but to save the Union; but he was also certain that the triumph of the Union meant the downfall of slavery.

Many people in the North found fault with the president because he did not at once take strong measures against slavery. But Lincoln knew what was right, even better than they.

He knew that to declare the slaves free, at once, would make all the people of what were called the border states — that is, states lying between the North and South, like Maryland and Kentucky — hostile to the Union; and he intended to keep them loyal.

So he went slowly; and when the great editor, Horace Greeley, who wished to bring about the triumph of the Union, but was impatient of slow measures, addressed a letter to the president, demanding that the slaves be made free at once, Lincoln, calm, patient, far-seeing, determined, answered in words that showed men how grand and brave and patriotic the great president was, and how he stood for the rights and the welfare of the whole people — the Union.

"My paramount duty," he said, in this answer to Mr. Greeley, "is to save the Union, and not either to destroy or save slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slaves, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less, whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more, whenever I believe doing more will help the cause. . . I have stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free."

This means, you see, that Lincoln would do, not what he wanted as Abraham Lincoln, but what he believed to be best as President of the United States. That is a hard thing to do, boys and girls — to separate personal desire from the general good.

But, all this time, Lincoln saw how things were moving, and felt that the downfall of slavery was not far distant.

He was waiting for the proper time to take the great step he had in mind. He took it not a moment too soon, nor a moment too late. To know just when to act is what makes the great man.

The war had been raging for nearly two years. There

A "CONTRABAND."

were defeats and victories; there were dark days and hopeful ones; but both sides were determined; they were "clinched" in as mighty a grapple as ever Abraham Lincoln, the champion wrestler, had tugged at, when he was a boy.

There was a flush of rebel triumph. General Lee and the Confederate army crossed the Potomac and invaded Maryland. Washington was in danger. Everything looked black for the Union cause. Then it was, that Lincoln made a solemn vow to God that, if the rebels were driven back, he would follow up the victory by declaring the slaves free.

This was not so much a vow, such as the knights and kings of old use to make, promising to build a church or do something as payment to the Lord, if they could be victors or escape disaster. It was a wise and practical decision. For now, the President saw that the emancipation of the slaves was necessary to the success of the Union arms.

He had grown into the idea gradually. As you know, he hated slavery; he wished to see it abolished; but he wished this to be done lawfully and justly. He still believed in the statement he had made in the speech that made him famous, that the government could not continue half slave and half free. He meant to have it all free; but, just how to accomplish this, was the problem he had to solve.

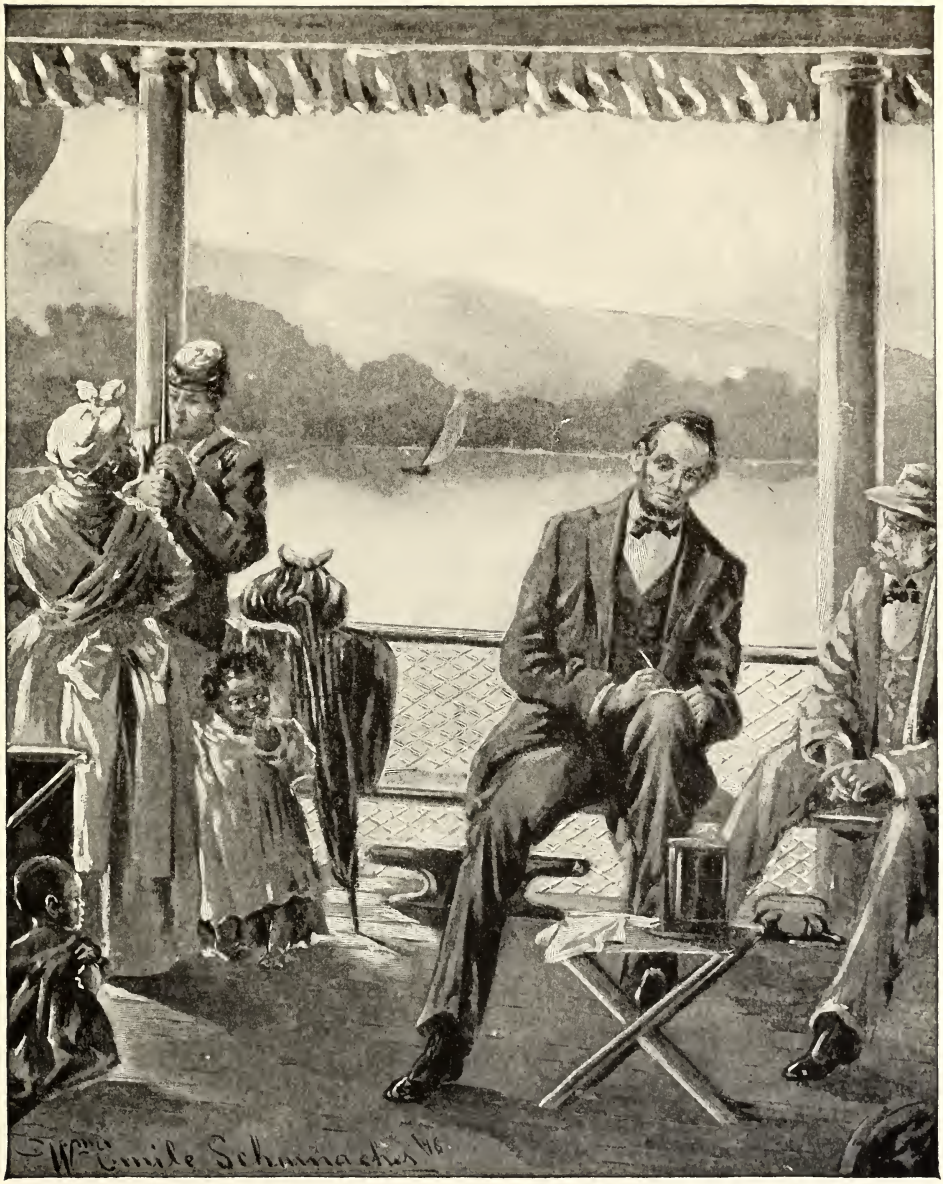
At first, he had consented to the shrewd decision of one of the Union generals, Butler, who said that if slaves were property, the same as horses or fodder, they could be set

down, when taken by the Union troops, as captured war material, or what is called "contraband of war." So the darkies, who came into the lines of the Union army, were set to work on the fortifications and were called "contrabands."

Next, Lincoln favored a gradual abolition of slavery, paying slave-holders who were loyal to the government the price of the negroes thus set free; then, he declared himself a believer in what was called the colonization scheme—that is, sending all the negroes out of the country, and settling them in some section of South America, where they could make a nation of their own; neither of these plans were liked by the people of the border states, who were loyal to the government; so Lincoln made a further step, by advising Congress to abolish slavery forever in the District of Columbia. This was done, and the president signed the act gladly. After that, he advocated arming the negroes, making soldiers of them, and giving freedom to all slaves who would serve as Union soldiers. This became a law. Soon after, another act was passed by Congress, and approved by the president, which made slavery illegal in all the territories of the United States—that is, those sections not yet made states.

So, you see, President Lincoln, step by step, was leading the country toward that final abolition of slavery, which he now saw must, some day, come about.

He thought the question all out carefully, wrote out



THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

what is called "a draft" of a paper, proclaiming freedom to all slaves within the rebel lines. It is stated that the very first draft of the emancipation proclamation was written by President Lincoln, one day, as he was sailing down the Potomac River on a steamboat on his way to visit the army.

Whether this is really so or not, it is certain that he wrote out his proclamation of his own accord, and not under any advice or pressure from other persons.

At last, one day in September, 1862, the president called his cabinet together and told them what he had decided to do. Then he drew from his pocket the paper he had written and submitted it to them for suggestions and opinions — though we must all remember that, even had they then been opposed to it, Lincoln would not have backed down.

He knew that the day of action had arrived; he could not longer waste precious time trying to please the people of the border states or those within the rebel lines. He felt certain that the people of the North would agree with him, and that something final must be done to show the world that the government of the United States pledged itself not only to victory but to freedom.

So at last the great step was taken. On the twenty-second of September, 1862, the emancipation proclamation was issued. It declared that, on the first day of January, 1863, "all persons held as slaves within any state or part of a

state in rebellion against the United States shall be THENCEFORWARD AND FOREVER FREE," and that "the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any effort they may make for their actual freedom."

It was done. The Emancipation Proclamation! The telegraph flashed the tidings all over the land. Boys ran through the city streets crying the news in "Extras." It was read with eagerness and satisfaction. The North hailed the act with joy. The president was assured that the nation approved and applauded his action. The war took a new form. It was fought for a republic of freemen — the preservation of a Union without slavery.

The final issue of the proclamation was made as announced, on the first day of January, 1863, and closed with these solemn words: "Upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God."

Abraham Lincoln had made his name immortal. He had kept the oath he had taken before the auction block in New Orleans; he had kept the vow he made when victory came to the Union arms. From that day, America was indeed "the home of the free," and was to be so, forever and ever.

"BOYS RAN THROUGH THE CITY STREETS CRYING THE NEWS IN 'EXTRAS'!"

It is hard for you, boys and girls, to understand or appreciate, now, the wisdom, the magnitude, the courage or the solemnity of this great act of emancipation.

What Washington and Jefferson and Franklin and all the great men who had founded and builded the United States of America had earnestly desired, but which none of them, up to that time, had dared to perform, Lincoln had dared. This man of the people, sprung from the people, in the face of hostility, of armed rebellion, of fanaticism on one side and timidity on the other, had wisely seen and boldly acted, and, by a stroke of his pen, had freed a race, put his native land in the foremost rank of the free nations of the earth, gained for himself the plaudits of mankind and secured an immortality that will cling to the name of Abraham Lincoln so long as the world shall last.

CHAPTER XII.

WHY THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT "SWAP HORSES."

THE Emancipation Proclamation did not end the war. There were yet to be two bloody years of fighting, defeat, anxiety and delay before the final triumph came.

There were dark days after that historic first of January,

1863. The President had faith in the future; but the generals in command of his armies were sometimes not "up to the mark," and occasioned him much trouble and annoyance.

Especially was this so in the Army of the Potomac, which was fighting to capture the city of Richmond, in Virginia, the capital of the Southern Confederacy.

President Lincoln insisted upon no plan of his own for fighting the battles of the Union. What he desired was to win them. While he studied the situation carefully, and proposed lines of action, he preferred to leave what was called the plan of campaign to the generals in command. All he asked of them was to do something, to capture Richmond, to overthrow the rebel forces, to end the war. Things moved along well in the West. But in Virginia, where the main struggle took place, matters went too slowly to suit the impatient people of the North, and the anxious, but ever-patient president.

I have told you that old General Scott, who was in command when the war begun, felt obliged to give up the command because he was too old for active service. General McClellan, who succeeded him, was a fine officer to build fortifications and drill soldiers; but he was timid in advancing; he demanded too much before he would engage in battle, and, instead of helping the president, really hindered him by complaints and demands and objections, until even the patient president saw that suc-

cess depended upon a change of generals, and he put another leader in command.

Meantime, in the West, America's greatest soldier was rising into prominence; fighting successfully, and drawing toward himself the hope and faith of the people. So, when General Grant had driven the Confederate armies from the field, captured Vicksburg, a most important point, and, with the help of the brave Admiral Farragut, opened the Mississippi River to the sea, the president did what all men felt that he would do, in time. He made Grant general-in-chief of all the armies of the United States, and gave the Army of the Potomac into his especial charge.

These matters occupied three years of the war. During all that time, the great president was in Washington, burdened with so many duties, so many anxieties and so many cares that it was making an old man of him before his time; it was furrowing his homely face with wrinkles; it was wearing out his life, his strength, his heart — everything but his will, his hope and his faith.

Every one criticised him — friends and foes alike. Little minds that could not appreciate his greatness of soul, called him hard names; impetuous people who would not wait to weigh all the necessities, called him slow and stupid; men with plans and schemes which would have wrecked rather than saved the Union cause, were angry because he would not do as they wished; people who wanted office or favors, almost worried the life out of him; jealous people

carried all sorts of tales to him; those who wished for peace and those who wanted a still more bitter war cried out against him; friends who should have stood true, deserted him; foes who wished his overthrow, laid traps for him — there never was, in all the history of great and noble and mighty leaders in the world's progress one more beset, maligned or worried than Abraham Lincoln in those years of war, which were a struggle for the very life and existence of the proud Republic of the United States.

But, through it all, Abraham Lincoln stood firm. With his hand on the tiller he steered the ship of state cautiously, securely, safely through the breakers.

There he stood at his post, serene, patient, uncomplaining; unmoved by insult, criticism or assault; a man absolutely to be relied upon to do the right thing, always. No other man in all the world could have filled his place so well, labored so persistently or won success so nobly. He, after all, was the Great Captain.

In the midst of the conflict his term of office as president expired. Who should succeed him? Who, in all the land, was able to take up his work? So men asked each other; and, as the time drew near, those who most bitterly opposed him set up other men as candidates for president.

Lincoln never made any secret of the fact that he wished to be president a second time. Office-seeking, boys and girls, when done from selfish motives is contemptible. But there are times when he who seeks an office may be consid-

DEFENDERS OF THE UNION.

Sherman. *Grant.* *Sheridan.*

Farragut. *McClellan.*

ered a hero. I have known men who sought and accepted an office simply for the good they could do in it, or because they felt it their duty to undertake a certain work, even at the risk of being called "office-seekers."

It was this spirit that animated Abraham Lincoln. He had accepted a great trust; he had attempted a great work; he knew, better than any other man, what was needed to carry that work to final success.

He had no hesitation in saying so. Abraham Lincoln was always truthful. He knew that a change of presidents — even if the new president should be of the party in power — would be unwise. As he put it, in the quaint way he had of speaking in homely phrases that appealed to the people, "it isn't safe to swap horses when you are crossing a stream."

The people knew this, too. Abraham Lincoln was re-nominated, with scarcely a dissenting vote, in the National Convention at Baltimore; and in November, 1864, he was re-elected president of the United States, by 212 out of the 233 electoral votes cast, or what was a majority of over four hundred thousand on the popular vote. The people had decided not to "swap horses."

One year before, on the nineteenth of November, 1863, Lincoln made what will probably always be considered the greatest speech of his life and one of the few great speeches of the world.

It was very short — 267 words in all; but every word counted. It was an occasion of especial interest to him.

Only four months before, upon those Pennsylvania hills and meadows that have now become historic, was fought and won the battle that was the turning point of the war — the battle of Gettysburg. The field was to be dedicated as a resting place, a national burying ground for those brave soldiers of the Union who fell in the fearful fight. To such a man as Abraham Lincoln, the place and the occasion had a peculiar influence. As a result, this brief but glorious oration came straight from the speaker's heart; and to-day, all over the world, it is esteemed of men, as Lincoln's masterpiece. But he never thought of it as an "oration." He simply called it "a little talk."

I asked you, some pages back, when I told you of Lincoln's first public speech, to set these two side by side, and see what the years had made of Abraham Lincoln — a thinker, an orator, a prophet.

To-day, that Gettysburg address is shrined in the heart of the nation as one of America's classics — that is, an utterance that will never die. Let every boy and girl in the land — North and South, alike — become familiar with its simple, but noble phrases; for, in the centuries to come, it will stand alone — unique, grand, inspired.

Read it again, all of you. Here it is:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing

whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that, from these honored dead, we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

With Grant in command of the army of the Potomac and in control of all the armies of the Union, steadily and persistently fighting on a plan that knew no such word as fail, and with a determination to "fight it out" to the bitter end, the close of the rebellion gradually drew near. At once,

Lincoln's clear vision saw this; and, with entire confidence in the man he had placed at the head of the armies, he did all in his power to help on the movements that should decide the final wrestle between the North and South.

But, though he had faith in Grant's ability as general and commander, his cares were not lessened, his anxiety was not abated. He watched even more eagerly for news from the front; he had to raise both men and money to carry on the war; great troubles burdened his soul; great problems filled his mind. It was the old experience of his days of wrestling come again. He gathered himself together for the final tussle, and put heart and mind and strength into the closing fall.

When certain officious, but well-meaning men on both sides wished for a conference for a possible peace, he did not say No; instead, he welcomed anything that would bring peace with honor — and an undivided Union; he even went himself to the conference at Fortress Monroe and talked with the men who represented the rebel government. But his will was as unyielding, his determination as strong, his desires as clear as ever. He would only proceed on General Grant's terms of unconditional surrender; the conference accomplished nothing, as he knew it could not; but it did show the people that the man at the helm was one who could not in any way be turned from his duty, and their confidence in his ability became stronger than ever. They saw that they had made no mistake when they refused to "swap

"FROM THE PRESIDENT!"

horses," or put another man in the place of the one directed of God to carry out to final success the cause of liberty and union.

In the midst of all these mighty events came the day of Lincoln's second inauguration as President of the United States — the fourth of March, 1865.

It was a raw and unpromising March day; but as the hour for the inauguration approached, the storm-clouds cleared away, and, as the president arose to deliver his brief inaugural address, the sun broke through the vanishing clouds, and a strain of glorious sunlight fell upon the speaker. It was a significant omen.

No less significant was the inaugural address. It is one of the shortest in the history of presidential inaugurals. But it will ever be remembered for its noble utterances, its thankful recognition of success, its confident note of victory, and, above all, for the immortal words of affection, devotion and kindliness with which it closed. You know them, of course:

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

It is a noble speech — that whole second inaugural.

Read it, I beg, boys and girls alike; and as you recall the words of praise that, as I told you, the western lawyer gave to Lincoln's first "piece" that was published in the village paper, in the old Indiana days, see how well that verdict fits this last of his public "pieces" — "The world can't beat it!" I doubt if, in the whole history of oratory, the world can really "beat," in composition, sympathy, sentiment and simplicity, this matchless second inaugural of Abraham Lincoln.

Does it not seem as if this man of noble soul, this man who was absolutely "with malice toward none," should have been spared to show the people he had so wondrously directed, how best "to bind up the nation's wounds?" It seems so, no doubt. But God knew best. He knew that it needed the crowning act of sacrifice to show the world, which had scarcely begun to appreciate the real greatness of Abraham Lincoln, how mighty a soul had been sent to this nation in its hour of deepest need. History is full of such sacrifices, but never one more notable than this.

The war came to an end. The armies of the Union crushed out the great rebellion, and peace came to the troubled land. Lincoln stood in the captured capital of the Confederacy, toward which, through all those months and years of struggle, his eyes had turned in desire and determination. Walking the streets of Richmond, the Emancipator had heard the cries of thanksgiving from the race to whom he had given freedom; in sight of the melting ranks of the army of opposition, he had clasped hands in

joy and gratitude with the great general who had won the final triumph. He knew that the war was over. He knew that the Union had been saved. His mission was done.

His heart was full of love for the vanquished; his thoughts were bent on how best to make all Americans brothers once more. From every part of the land came praise and congratulation that the end had been reached, and that, to him, were due the thanks of his countrymen for a nation reunited and a homeland saved for freedom.

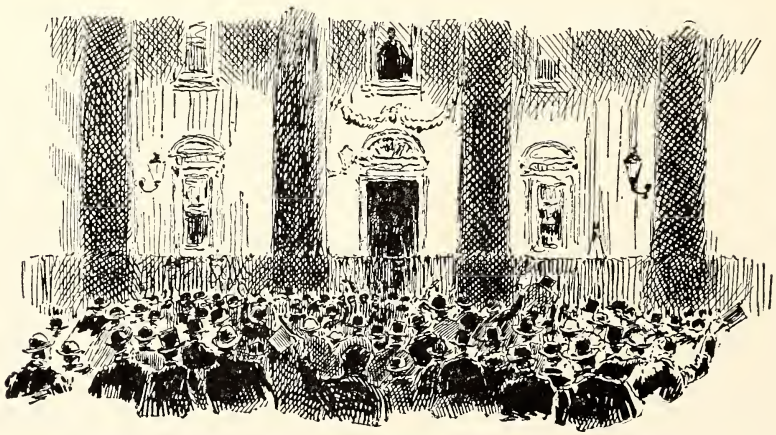
TWO FAMOUS MEN.
Lincoln and Grant in Washington.

Crowds stormed the White House, wild with joy and pride. Again and again, they called for the president; and, from the central window, above the noble entrance to that home of our presidents, Lincoln made his last public speech — that one beginning, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." The future looked bright to him, at last; and, with joy and comfort in his patient heart, he said to his wife: "We have had a hard time together since we came to Washington; but now the war is over, and, with

God's blessing upon us, we may hope for four years of happiness. Then, we will go back to Illinois and pass the remainder of our lives in peace."

How differently that journey back to Illinois was made, you know too well.

On the night of the fourteenth of April, 1865; in the theatre to which, because the people wished to see him, he had gone, accompanied by his wife and two young friends; while his mind was easy, his heart full of love and peace, and

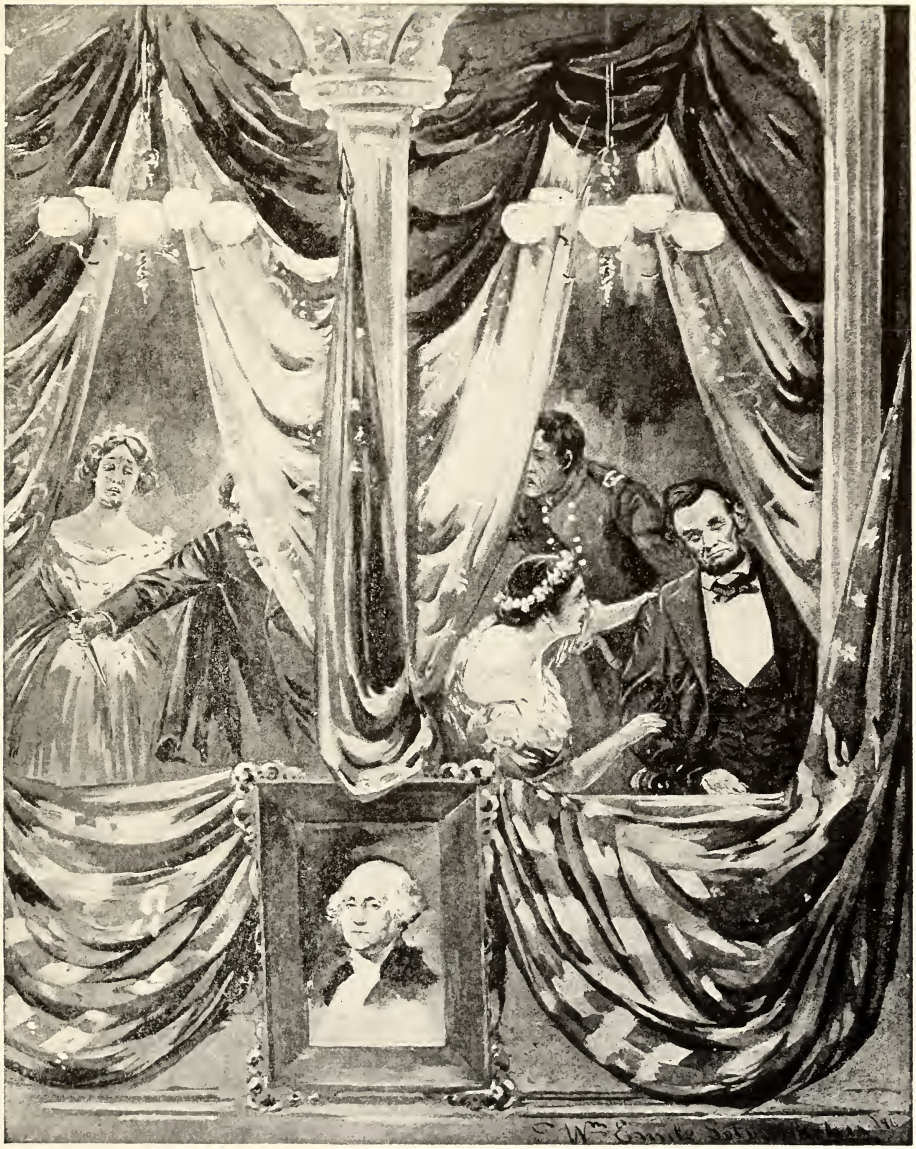


THE LAST SPEECH.

"We meet not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart."

his thoughts given to how best he could smooth from the land the scars and wounds of war — the end came.

One to whom he had done no ill; one who had, against this great and royal soul, no personal complaint or any cause for revenge — a thoughtless, ambitious, conceited and hair-brained fanatic named John Wilkes Booth — shot down the



THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

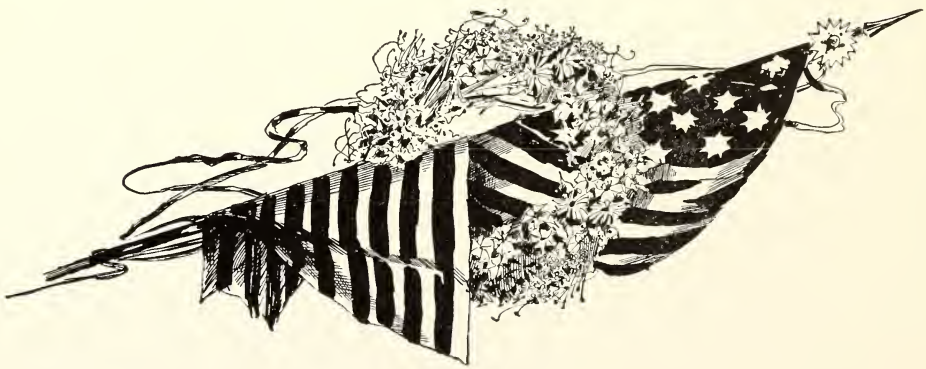
(*April* 14, 1865.)

president, as he sat enjoying the play ; and, at half-past seven, on the morning of Saturday, the fifteenth of April, the great president closed his eyes forever. Abraham Lincoln was dead.

Such of us as lived in those stirring times may forget, as the years go by, many things of note and importance that happened in those years of war. But no one will ever forget the great wave of indignation, sorrow, amazement and despair that swept over the land when the sad news was told. On the same crowded city street where, four years before, I had as a schoolboy, seen the living president go southward to enter upon his duties, I watched again the silent procession, the eight black horses, the sombre catafalque trapped with nodding plumes, beneath which lay the body of the martyr, stilled in death, borne westward to his final resting place.

Along the same route by which he had first come to Washington to assume the great duties to which the people had called him, the dead president was borne. Bells tolled, cannons boomed, great throngs stood uncovered and mute, in sun and rain, as the funeral train rolled on ; in great cities the people, in tears and silence, filed past the dead form of the man who had done so much for them and for the world ; then, in the western town, where so much of his life had been spent, in pleasant Oak Ridge Cemetery, just outside the city of Springfield in Illinois, the great captain was laid to rest. His life-work was done.

It was a sad day for America; and yet it was a glorious one. For his was a death that cemented anew, as no other occasion could, the people who for years had been divided; now, thanks to the great man who had died for his fellow-men, the Republic was to move steadily forward, reunited, reconsecrated and renewed, to a future and a grandeur that this great man foresaw, and freely gave his life to assure. In all the history of the world, boys and girls, there has been no nobler life, no grander death, no surer immortality than that of Abraham Lincoln, the savior of his country.



CHAPTER XIII.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN THE AMERICAN.

I HAVE not attempted in this story of the martyr-president to introduce or explain grave political questions, to tell of generals or statesmen, or to speak of battles and campaigns. Of all these you may read in any history of the United States; and, when you are older, you must read for yourselves some one of the excellent lives of Lincoln to which this story stands only as an introduction.

But I have tried to show you what Abraham Lincoln was — a man sprung from the people, working his way from poverty to fame, from a little log cabin beside a Kentucky stream to the stately White House in Washington. You have read of his trials and his troubles, his desires and his drawbacks, his determination, his pluck and his ambition. You are not to think of him as a man without faults; for he had them — but he rose above them. All his life, before the year 1858, was a preparation for the seven years of statesmanship, leadership and greatness that made his work enduring and his name immortal.

I wish you to think of him not as a marble statue, a thing to regard with awe; but as a man, a being to love.

And children did love him. His life is filled with little incidents that show his affection for children. It is this part of his noble nature that made him so full of sympathy and tenderness that he could not say No to a petition for leniency, life or pardon, and has linked, to his fame as a

"WELL, GRACE, YOU SEE I'VE LET MY WHISKERS GROW," HE SAID.

leader in a mighty war, his forgiveness, alike to those who had fought against the Union he adored, and to those unfortunates whom the demands of war would have punished with death, but for this great-hearted man's tenderness and sympathy.

From the days when he rocked the babies to sleep in the humble log cabins of his acquaintances, to the days when he

romped with his own children in the White House, his regard for children was ever noticeable. All his early pictures show him beardless; all his pictures after his election give him a beard. That beard was due to the suggestion of a little girl in New York state; having seen and heard Mr. Lincoln in the days before the war, when he was traveling and speaking in the east, she thought a beard would greatly improve his looks, and wrote to tell him so. He took the hint kindly, as he always did, and when on his way to the White House as president, his train stopped at the village where Grace lived. He asked if Grace were in the throng at the depot. She was, of course. For she greatly admired Mr. Lincoln. She was brought forward and Mr. Lincoln said: "Well, Grace; you see I have let my whiskers grow for you." Then he took her hands, bent down and kissed her, and Grace was a happy little girl, you may be sure.

Once, a country boy, who had come to Boston to begin the world, could not withstand temptation, and stole money from the letters that he took to or from the post-office. He was found out, arrested, and sent to prison. But some tender-hearted people interested themselves in the boy and applied for his pardon, believing that if he had another chance he would be a better boy. The pardon was presented to the president, who, in the funny way he had, said if the petition were true, it would seem as if there were not many such boys as this one, outside the sunday-school.

For, you know, a petition for pardon always dwells on the good qualities of the one to be pardoned. Then, growing serious, he asked the boy's father what would be done if his son were released. The father replied that the boy had had quite enough of the city, and would gladly go back to the farm. At once, the president signed the pardon, and the boy was set free.

"WHO IS THE LITTLE BOY?" HE ASKED.

One day, a little boy of twelve slipped into the president's room, unnoticed, in the crowd of senators, and representatives, and generals and politicians, who were crowding for an audience. But the president noticed him.

"Who is this little boy?" he asked pleasantly.

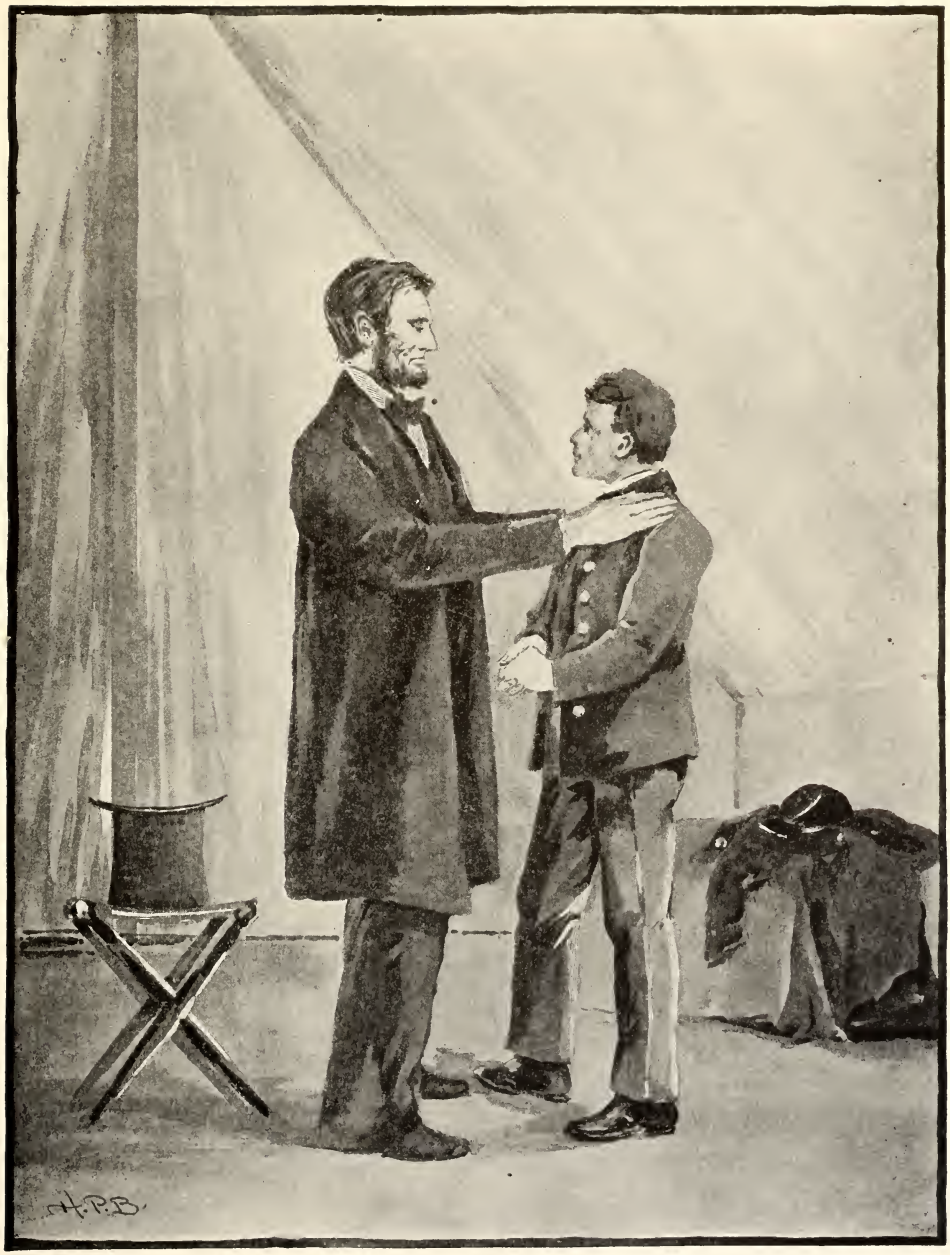
There was not a senator, nor a politician, nor a general in the room who could tell; but the boy, plucking up courage, said he was "a good little boy" who had come to Washington to get a situation as page in the House of Representatives — you know, small boys are used as messen-

gers in Congress. The bothered president, his mind full of important affairs, told the little fellow, kindly, that the president did not appoint pages, but that he must see the head doorkeeper of the House of Representatives. The boy, however, evidently did not intend to let go of the president who, so he supposed, was head of everything, and had the say. So he again told the president that he was a *good* boy; and, in proof, he drew from his pocket a recommendation, signed by his pastor and the leading men of his town; he told the president, too, that his mother was a widow and that the appointment would be a great help to her. Then Mr. Lincoln, smiling down at the little fellow, took the applicant's letter of recommendation and wrote on the back of it: "If Captain Goodnow (the head doorkeeper) can give this 'good little boy' a place he will oblige A. Lincoln." The boy got the place.

The president was very fond of his own boys. One had died in Springfield, before Mr. Lincoln was president, and the father had always tender memories of the boy he had lost. Three went with him to the White House — Robert, aged eighteen, Willie, ten, and Thomas, or "Tad" as he was called, a bright little fellow of eight. In the very darkest days of the war-time, in February, 1862, Willie died, to the great grief of his father and mother. Robert was in college and, after he graduated, went to the war. But "Tad" lived in the White House all the time, and a book could be written about his experiences, his doings and his pranks. He

was full of fun, and Lincoln loved him dearly. It was "Tad" who could cheer him up in days of gloom or when he was most worried or troubled; and the burdened president was never so busy or occupied that he could not stop for a word or a frolic with his boy. At the very end of the war, when men were jubilant with victory, and some were vindictive toward the conquered, Mr. Lincoln in a speech said: "What shall we do with the rebels?" One man cried, "hang them;" but Tad, who was at his father's elbow, said, "hang on to them." "Tad's got it," said Mr. Lincoln; "he's right. We'll hang on to them," smiling at the little fellow's desire for clemency. Do you remember the character of Mr. Great-Heart in Bunyan's wonderful story of the "Pilgrim's Progress?" That was Abraham Lincoln. His great heart held in it patience, courage, determination, sympathy and love.

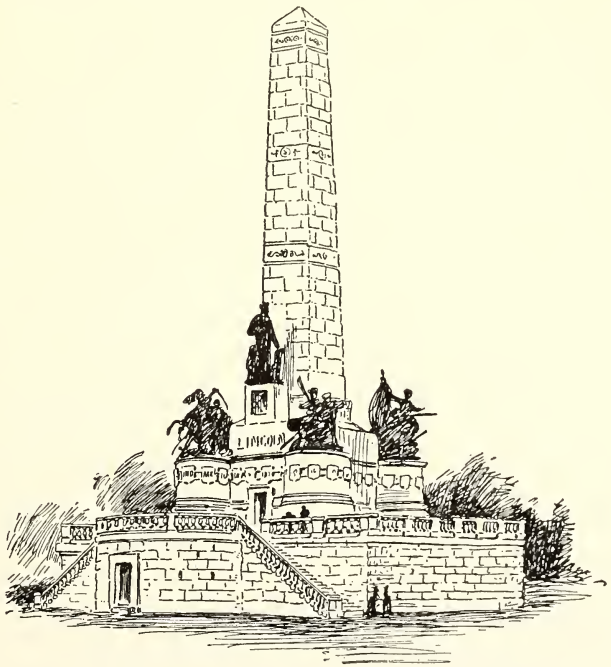
"TAD" AND HIS FATHER.



"MY BOY, MY BILL IS A LARGE ONE," SAID THE PRESIDENT.

Defeat could not subdue him; impatience could not move him; criticism could not turn him from his purpose. He saw what was to be done and he stood upright and sturdy in the path he had marked out, fighting gallantly to the end. But distress in others always affected him. He could be stern if need be, though always just; but if he ever wavered at all, it was when some poor fellow's life was in danger.

"Go away, Swett," he said to an old friend, who called on him in the White House. "To-morrow is butcher-day. I must go through these papers and see if I cannot find some excuse to let these poor fellows off;" and the tender-hearted president turned to the pile of papers which were the death-warrants of soldiers who had failed in their duty; not because he wished to shirk the evidence, but to find one single loophole that would give any of them a chance for life through pardon. "The man must not be shot, Mr. Lincoln," cried the friend of a



THE LINCOLN MONUMENT AT SPRINGFIELD, ILL.
(*Dedicated October* 15, 1874.)

recreant soldier, whom Stanton, the just, but stern war-secretary would not pardon. "Well," said the president, "I don't believe shooting *will* do him any good. Give me that pen," and the pardon was granted.

The story of William Scott, "the sleeping sentry," is one of the best known among all these tales of Lincoln's sympathy. Perhaps you have read it. William Scott had marched all day and then volunteered to stand as sentry, at night, in place of a sick comrade. He was found asleep on his post. He was courtmartialed and sentenced to be shot. Friends tried to save his life and went to Mr. Lincoln with the story. He heard it and made up his mind to save the boy's life. He was afraid to trust another with the message and went himself to see the prisoner, who was under guard at Washington. Lincoln entered the tent where Scott was confined, talked with him of his home on the Vermont farm, his school, his mother. Then he said: "My boy, look me in the face. You are not going to be shot to-morrow. I am going to trust you and send you back to your regiment. How are you going to pay me?"

Young Scott was surprised, overjoyed, but worried. He did not know how be could pay Mr. Lincoln. A president would need a big fee, he thought. And when, finally, he said he thought the boys would club together, and perhaps they could raise five or six hundred dollars, the great president put his hands on the lad's shoulders and said: "My boy, my bill is a large one. Your friends cannot pay it.

There is only one man in all the world who can pay it, and his name is William Scott. If, from this day, William Scott does his duty, so that if I were there when he comes to die, he can look me in the face and say, 'I have kept my promise, I have done my duty as a soldier,' then, my debt will be paid. Will you promise?"

Utterly broken down by the kindness and seriousness of the president, Scott promised; he was released, sent back to his regiment, and died, months after, fighting bravely in battle, where almost his last words were: "Boys, I've tried to do the right thing. If any of you get the chance, tell the president I have tried to be a good soldier, and true to the flag, and tell him I think of his kind face and thank him again that he gave me the chance to fall like a soldier in battle and not like a coward, by the hands of my comrades."

All through the life-story of this great American, as you have read it, you must have felt the influence of his loving-kindness. We see it, again and again — from the time he picked up the little birds and put them back into the nest, to the hour where he pardoned a deserter, because he could not bear to see the tears of the soldier's wife or look at the little baby, which would be made fatherless unless this kind-hearted president interfered.

I have told you, particularly, of Lincoln's sympathetic nature; for after all, it was because of his deep sympathy that he possessed the spirit of charity, and because of his charity that he was absolutely without hatred or resentment

against those who fought him openly in the field or secretly at home.

And yet he could "get mad," even as Washington could, under certain circumstances. You remember how, in his boyhood, he hated meanness or foul play; how, later, he was indignant against falsehood and ridicule; especially, how he could not endure a slander against the Union.

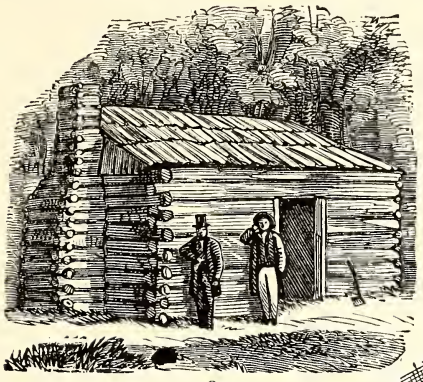
No more could he endure an insult to a friend. One of the few times when he was known to be really angry after he was in the White House, was when certain officious persons came to him with an evil report against one of his nearest friends.

As the president listened silently, his face flushed. Then he took the paper. "Is this mine, to do with as I please?" he asked. "Certainly, Mr. President," replied one of the delegation. Lincoln walked to the fireplace and dropped the paper in the fire. "Good-morning, gentlemen," he said. But that was a sufficient reply. "I could not trust myself to reply in words," the president said afterward, "I was so angry. It was an unjust attack upon my dearest personal friend."

At another time, a person, strongly recommended, swore in the course of an interview. When he did so the second time, the president opened the door. "I thought the senator had sent me a gentleman," he said. "I find I am mistaken. There is the door, sir. Good-evening!" Do you suppose that man ever forgot the rebuke?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
Heroic statue by Augustus St. Gaudens, in Lincoln Park, Chicago.

I could go on for hours, telling you stories about Abraham Lincoln. Of few other Americans are so many stories told; and not one but shows him to have been a remarkable man, with a wonderful story. Think of it! A poor boy, born amid mean and poor surroundings; brought up on a rough frontier, among rough people; failing many times, but never giving in; educating himself, in spite of difficulties and discouragements; making himself respected and popular with the people among whom he lived; he became, in time, the chosen representative of those people in their state government, and, at last, in the hour of uncertainty and danger, was selected by the people of the whole country to become the head of the nation. Then it was, that Abraham Lincoln through four terrible years of conflict, anxiety and peril,



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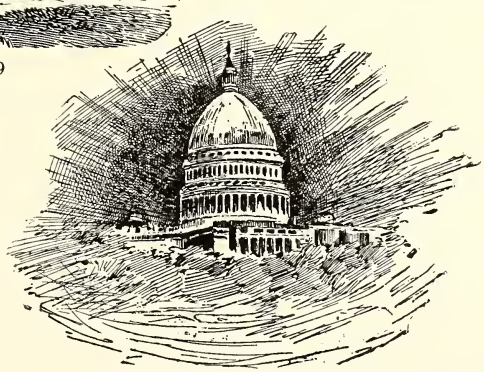

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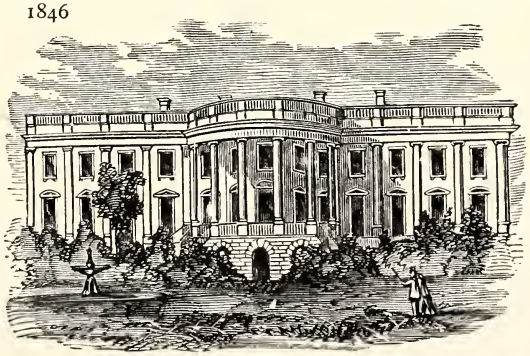
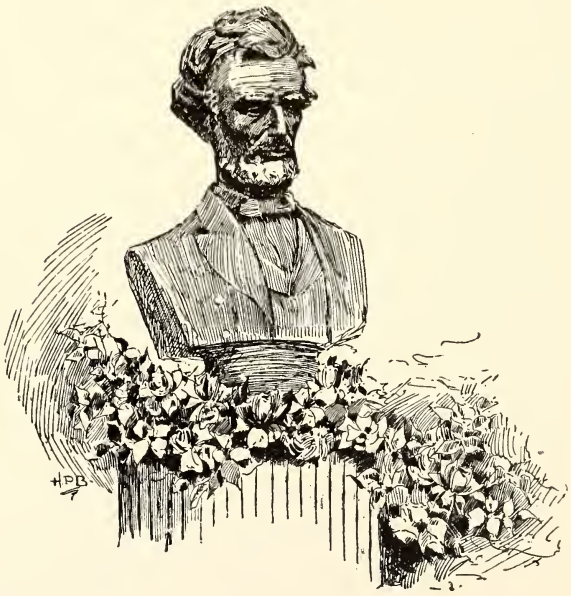


1861

displayed an ability for leadership that was only excelled by his marvellous patience, and a masterly grasp of public affairs that was equalled by his knowledge of men and his wisdom in handling them.

Fearless, upright, truthful, just and kind, he would do anything to save an erring soldier from death; and yet, because he knew its need, he would not take one backward step in the mighty war fought to keep the nation undivided.



THE AMERICAN.

More power was given into his hand than king or emperor holds; and yet he was never, for one instant, moved by ambition or the desire for personal power. He lived and died a poor man, with no desire to make money out of his nation's distress, and with no time to devote to anything but his country's need and service. He saved a nation and emancipated a race.

While he lived, the world did not understand his methods or appreciate his greatness; but his countryman learned to put their trust in him without question, and to feel that

it was due to him that the nation passed successfully through a life and death struggle.

When he died, the whole world mourned, and each year only increases his greatness and the world's recognition of his nobility, his grandeur and his statesmanship.

His is a story, boys and girls of America, that you can never know too well; for it tells you how the poorest boy can reach the highest power, through ways more wonderful, and by paths more difficult than were ever trod by hero in wonder story or prince in fairy tale. Men call him the typical American, the man of the people, the noblest product of American civilization. He is all that; but, as time goes on, and the real truth of his marvellous life comes to light, the world, and you, too, boys and girls, upon whom depends the future of the Republic he saved from ruin and the people he made anew, will carry him in your hearts and hail him in your speech as, before all others, *the* American — the greatest, wisest, noblest, truest man of the nineteenth century.

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